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The

PHANTOM EMPEROR

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NAPOLEON III

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THE PHANTOM EMPEROR

THE ROMANCE AND TRAGEDY OF NAPOLEON III

BY

OCTAVE AUBRY

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH BY

FREDERICK H. MARTENS

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Napoleon III

THE
PHANTOM EMPEROR

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PROLOGUE

Forli

MUSKET in hand, harassed and mud-stained, they take their way along the hedges, thickets, and small copses of pine and green oak. Ten or twelve men in all, they hurry on. They must make Forli before midnight. Behind them the March twilight already shadows the Appenines, white with snow. In Forli only will they be safe. Patrols of Austrian Pandours and papal soldiers—soldiers who, averse to pitched battle, are adepts at ambuscades, and never forget to empty the pockets of those whom their carbines have laid low—are beating the countryside.

The revolt in the Romagna is drawing to an end. It has lasted for two months. In February it seemed as though it might set the whole peninsula ablaze. The Sacred College, terrified, prepared to leave Rome. Carbonari, Liberals, captained by Armandi, in Bologna, Rimini, and Ravenna flung to the breeze the flag of the olden Italian kingdom, the kingdom of Napoleon. But Gregory XVI had implored Austrian aid. Croats, Hungarian hussars in white dolmans and high mitred caps, had hurried to Milan. Well armed, well equipped, they had the best of the insurgents, who were cleverer at getting themselves killed than at fighting. Soon Armandi was holding no more than a mere strip of the Romagna. His companies disbanded. The cause of Italian independence, for the nonce, at any rate, was lost.

Three young men lead the fugitives. The tallest,

brown-whiskered, with a bold, open face, is Prince Napoleon, oldest son of Louis Bonaparte, erstwhile king of Holland, and of Queen Hortense. His younger brother Louis, whose adolescent features are still somewhat undetermined, has difficulty in keeping up with him. Their pace seems to have exhausted him. Bareheaded, the wind blows his hair about. His musket is carried by Henri Conneau, the brothers' friend, who has not for a moment left them during this adventure. All aglow with enthusiasm, they had flung themselves into the insurrection despite their father's express prohibition, yet with the tacit consent of the Queen, so ambitious for her sons. The time of a dream's passing—and Italy had dropped back into the clutch of her bigoted and despotic princes, while the Bonapartes, at Armandi's command and to save their necks, flee toward Ancona, there to put out to sea.

* * *

By now they have reached a sort of moor, overgrown with brambles and shave-grass. Brooklets trickling down the mountain lose themselves in its expanse without a murmur. Another hundred steps in advance and the moor turns morass. Boots sink in the slimy ooze.

"Up to the road again!" commands Napoleon.

"The Pandours will be able to see us," objects Conneau.

"Better fight than be caught in the quicksand."

They turn off to the right and halfway up the slope, crowned by the ancient Æmelian Way, enter a hollow road bordered with grey rock, and, here and there, tufts of thorny bush. Forli is no more than two or three miles distant. Its high bell-tower appears, as though suspended in a leaden sky. Beyond the edge of a hill a few bright dots: the first houses.

They are walking Indian file, Napoleon in the lead. Louis, for all his weariness, tries to push ahead of him.

"No," says his senior, "if there's going to be any danger, this is my place." They move on in silence. The country about seems to contract beneath the fall of night, to grow harder, more arid than before.

"Listen," whispers Arese. "Some one is cocking a pistol."

Almost immediately two shots are fired from a broom thicket not more than thirty-two yards away. A bullet creases Conneau's hand. Napoleon falls his full length, without a sound.

Arese, Roccasera, and the others rush like madmen into the brush. Louis and Conneau kneel beside Napoleon. Conneau, a physician, undoes his coat, opens his shirt, bends over him. Not a pulse-beat. A small wound in the upper part of the abdomen; it hardly bleeds at all. Napoleon has been killed outright, by a bullet through his heart.

Crushed, annihilated, Louis sobs in Henri's arms. A few shots ring out upon the night. Useless, imprudent, random discharges. Their comrades reappear; pursuit has been in vain. The assassins have noiselessly gone to earth in the thickets. Who are they? Papal police spies, Austrian gendarmes, mere brigands, traitors to the Italian cause, paid to deprive it of a chief with a future? The mystery will never be solved.

And now they must reach Forli as soon as possible. The Austrian patrols, aroused, are on the alert to attack the little band of fugitives. Arese and Roccasera cut branches and plait them to form a bier on which they place the body.

They resume their march—at a slower pace, alas! Behind his brother's corpse, supported by Conneau, Louis, drunk with despair, stumbles at every step he takes.

* * *

Now they are in a room paved with crumbling tiles, with dirty, rickety furniture. Near an alcove, on a chair, is a branch of boxwood in a saucer of water. Beside it burns a candle. On a bed with Madras curtains is stretched a form at which Louis and Henri glance only from the corner of the eye.

Conneau makes a pretense of watching at the shutterless window which frames the abyss of night; Louis sits at a table, a sheet of paper before him, pen in hand. He is not writing. As though proceeding from the alcove, a sinister silence weighs down the two men to such a degree that, together, each of them feels he is alone.

Louis drops his pen and wipes his eyes.

"I can't, Henri. I don't know how to tell her. . . . And her despair! I wish I were in his shoes!"

"You must let her know, Louis. She must still be at Foligno. You must—and there's your father, in Florence. You have barely time. Otherwise the news will take the Queen by surprise. You know how quickly rumor travels. Write these two letters, I beg of you. Our friend Roccasera has found two reliable messengers to carry them. They're waiting below."

"Couldn't you go to my mother? You would break the news more gently . . ."

"I don't want to leave you alone. You're shaking with fever. The Queen would never forgive me. She entrusted you to my care."

"And if she learns the truth?"

"Who among those in the secret would betray us? No one will say a word. All will respect her grief. Besides, she'll not come here. The enemy would not let her pass. Tell her to await you in Pesaro. We will leave at dawn to join her."

"So we're to abandon him in this place? Poor Napoleon, he is not even to be buried by French hands! Impossible, Henri! I'll never consent to it."

"He is dead. There is nothing more we can do for him. You're the one to be saved, for you are alive."

"How hard you are, Henri. Didn't you love him?"

"Yes, I loved him. But he himself, who sees us, orders me to think now only of your mother and of you."

"What will be done with him?"

"I've arranged everything with the Forli priest. He's a worthy man. Tomorrow Napoleon will be quietly buried. Later, when peace has returned, you can have him taken up and laid beside his grandmother, the Empress Josephine, in the church of Rueil."

"Thanks, dear Henri, you are kind. Forgive me. My grief makes me unjust. And this lie I must tell my mother revolts me."

"Be reasonable, Louis. Your mother must not know that your brother was slain by an Austrian bullet, fired from ambush. Would she not reproach herself for having let you both go, knowing what you had in mind, against your father's repeated commands? For her sake, to spare her terrible scenes with King Louis, it is essential that Napoleon should have perished of disease. Smallpox is raging in the Romagna. He will have succumbed to it. You can't back out now. The blow will be less cruel for your mother, and for your sister-in-law as well."

"Poor Charlotte, so soon a widow! They were so devoted to each other!"

He once more picked up the pen and, his eyes inscrutable, wrote a few lines.

"Listen, I've merely said that Napoleon is very low, almost past hope. She will read between the lines, will question the courier. Tell him, above all, not to answer at once. He must hesitate, in order to prepare her. How can she stand it? She is very brave, but it is enough to kill her. Her health is so frail. Here, seal it. As for my father, I'll write him tomorrow, once I've held my mother in my arms. I'll have to talk things over with her. No, do not insist, I couldn't bring myself to do it. My father . . . She, she is all that is left me. Go, Henri, and hurry back."

Conneau felt his pulse.

"You've a rising fever, Louis. Lie down for a while. I'll watch in your stead."

The Prince did not reply.

"If you fall seriously ill, if the epidemic, which is very dangerous, attacks you, what shall we do? Tomorrow the white coats will be here. It would be impossible to transport you. And if you're captured it means death. Cardinal Fesch wrote you so; the Emperor's nephew will be stood up before a firing-squad, just as the Duke d'Enghien was in his day. And your mother will die of it."

Louis raised his amiable yet obstinate face.

"Abandon him already—no, I'll part from my poor Napoleon in a few hours' time. But I wish to stay with him to the end, let come what may. Nothing can change my destiny; it is already written. Go—I'll wait for you.

And above all, dear friend, above all, see that the Queen is spared in every possible way."

Conneau descending with the letter, the young man rose and, heavily, moved to the bed and forced himself to look at the ghastly form, long extended beneath the sheet. On the vaulted chest gleamed a small metal cross with the Christ crucified.

He seated himself by the bedside, his head in his hands. There was nowhere else he could take refuge. This brother dead at the age of twenty-seven was his best friend. Their youth had been divided by their parents' dissensions. Napoleon lived in Florence, with his father Louis, who had once been king of Holland. Louis, his junior by four years, had stayed with his mother, Queen Hortense, who, after the fall of the Empire, had taken refuge in her little château of Arenenberg, on the shore of Lake Constance. He had never forgotten their grief when their dear Napoleon left for Florence. At the time he was only a little boy. He had fallen ill. His mother, utterly crushed for a number of weeks, was subject to fainting spells from which only the appeals of Louis could rouse her. Then, time passed. . . . Off and on they met again. They often wrote each other. Their affection retained its warmth. Now that they had grown to manhood they counted upon spending all their time together. They had passed two weeks in Florence, busied with great political projects. Without the knowledge of King Louis, peevish and gouty, and responding to Menotti's patriotic appeal, they had joined the Carbonari—"The charcoal-burners," that great secret society dedicated to Italian liberty and independence—and engaged in this revolutionary adventure in which the older—who knows?—might pick up a

crown. The Emperor had been king of Italy. Why should not his nephew, despite the Pope and the Austrians, become so in his turn?

And this was the end of all their hopes. Handsome, intelligent, fiery and yet with a heart full of tenderness and humanity, there the poor fellow lay on his mattress, stiffened beneath his winding-sheet, his head swathed—this comrade Louis had so greatly desired. He was just beginning to know him. . . . His support had crumbled. Louis once more found himself tottering along alone.

He could not avenge him. Not now, in any event. He would have to flee, rejoin his mother, escape from the Pandours, take ship at Ancona. All the fatigue, all the dangers of life stretched before him, all its sadness. Yet his soul is not one to give up. This slim, blond young man, his grey-blue eyes filled with visions, will show a leader's patience and energy, now that duties have devolved upon him.

A catastrophe of this kind changes everything. His dead older brother was the political heir of the King of Rome, who is about to die. The Emperor's son, travestied as an archduke, is spitting and sweating with tuberculosis in Schönbrunn. His physicians declare that he will last six months, perhaps a year, but hardly longer. Once he has stepped down, to be immured in his Austrian tomb, Hortense's Benjamin, Louis, will represent the Man of Austerlitz. None will challenge his precedent right nor dispute his claim to the part. His father, the old King of Holland, is half-paralyzed. He has come to loathe ambition. Joseph, the head of the clan, grown old, sceptical and fat, fed up with crowns, thinks only of his ease, of his pleasures. His children are all daughters. Jerome,

on a lower rung in the ladder of heredity, incidentally, multiplies his genuflexions to the government of King Louis-Philippe to secure an authorization to reënter France—with a pension. Lucien has changed into a Roman prince who cultivates archæology. So Louis, Louis alone is left. His head, henceforth, will be weighed down by the most gravid name of man's creation, a name stark with glory, and which may still serve as the "Open Sesame!" to surprising destinies.

It is whispered that a shadow rests on Louis's birth. What of it! He himself has no doubts. In his own eyes as in those of the world at large, he is a Bonaparte, Napoleon's nephew. He personifies the future. Which future? No one knows. One as vast and undefined as space. Yet one that is assured in a Europe which suffers and writhes in the fetters wherein the treaties of 1815 and the Holy Alliance have sought to immobilize her. Sooner or later she will burst her bonds. And finally, she will turn toward the one who, incarnating the revolutionary tradition, will appear at the same time as the champion of the national units. Only yesterday this rôle seemed to be reserved for Louis's brother. It now has passed on to the junior. A redoubtable, magnificent legacy, yet one that Louis is ready to accept. Hitherto he has lived affectionately submissive to his older brother, without specific aims in view. He was free, he could abandon himself to his tastes and pleasures, be absent-minded, easy-going, indolent, fond of the countryside, his books, short-lived affairs of the heart.

In a few seconds all has changed. An anonymous bullet has turned this young prince, a disregarded background figure, into the standard-bearer of the Napoleonic

idea. Fate threw a main for him as she once had cast one for "General Vendémiaire," as the first Napoleon was called after the month in which he saved the Convention with his grapeshot. The last son of the affectionate and ambitious Hortense has grown up in the obsessing cult of Napoleon. His mother ceaselessly spoke about HIM, as of a living being. He knows every detail of his story. He breathes only in the ardent shadow of his genius. He confounds him, in his proud fondness, with that forbidden France which he lost when he was seven years old, on the morrow of Waterloo. Then little Louis did not want to leave Malmaison. He stamped and wept, shouting:

"We'll come back!"

He never came back. Yet in the back of his mind he cherishes a deathless image: that of the Emperor raising him to his knee, his marble features humanized by a smile, and saying:

"This fellow, for whom no one has a thought to spare, may yet make a name for himself."

For the past ten years Napoleon has been resting in the Vale of the Willows, in "Saint Helena, the little isle." . . . But something of his soul has taken refuge in this timid young man without a single one of his traits, yet who is also capable, at present, of waiting, struggling, and feigning in order to grow great.

He suffers so exceedingly, he is so wearied, that he has sunk into a kind of prostration, a mortal languor. His head drops on his chest, his eyes shut, his thoughts steal on tiptoe into a land whose visions are vague and calm. Louis Bonaparte is no longer in the sordid Cavallo inn, on an icy March night, beside a corpse. He is in the park at Arenenberg. His mother, still young and graceful, in

a light-colored gown, has her hands full of daisies and buttercups he has just gathered on the lawns. . . . The Queen says, tenderly:

"Do not pick so many, Louis. You've enough here to make a crown."

But he does not obey her. He picks, and keeps on picking. He can never gather enough flowers for this mother whom he so dearly loves. . . .

A step. The Prince opens his eyes. His friend has returned.

"Ah," he murmurs, "why did you wake me, Henri? I was so happy. I seemed to be dead, myself. And I dreamed some wonderful dreams."

"I've seen to everything," says the doctor. "The Queen will be informed tomorrow morning. And now you must lie down, Louis, for a couple of hours. I'll stay here. Your face is very flushed; I've gotten hold of quinine, you must take some."

Hortense's son shakes his head.

"If you wish. But what difference will it make? It will have no effect one way or the other."

He seizes his hand, presses it convulsively, and points to the bed:

"Look, Henri! There's where my youth ends; my manhood has begun."

PART ONE

Arenenberg in 1836

They were speaking of Madame Récamier, who had been spending a few days at the château, and who had left the evening before to rejoin M. de Chateaubriand in Lyon.

"She retains her youth and charm," said the Queen, "and how loyal she is to her friends!"

King Jerome, half sitting, half lying, on a sofa, sat up and—pointing to his daughter Mathilde, who at a round table at Louis's side was turning the pages of an album—said:

"When I saw her for the first time—it was at Madame Tallien's—she was just about Mathilde's age. She looked like an angel. And she was already married—at sixteen!"

The face of the old King of Westphalia had taken on an increasing resemblance to that of Napoleon. He gloried in it, imitating his brother's walk and dress.

"My dear Jerome, people married early in those days," said Hortense. "You know something about it—at first hand."

She winked. Jerome laughed, not in the least embarrassed by this allusion to his adventure with Miss Patterson. He had retained his lightness and gallantry, like some gentleman of old France. He became serious only when he spoke of the Emperor. This reverence, no doubt, was the only deeper sentiment of which he was capable.

Tall Mme. Salvage—her sharp, bird-like profile bent

over her crocheting near a window—amused herself estimating ages.

"Juliette Récamier will soon be fifty-six."

"Don't tell me that!" cried Hortense. "My dear, you make me unhappy. Why, she does not look to be forty. She has kept her complexion and still carries herself like a Greek nymph."

Mathilde raised her eyes. Handsome, already somewhat stout, she was dressed in black like the other women in the château. Not quite six months before Madame Letitia had died in Rome, and the Bonaparte family were in deep mourning for "the mother of kings."

"I, too," said the young girl, in a decided tone of voice, "intend to marry young."

Under the green table-cover her cousin Louis grasped her hand and held it in his own.

"You are right, Mathilde," said Hortense. "One never can have too much time for happiness."

The young folk were engaged. Not as yet officially. But their pronounced liking, confessed during their walks of the past few days in the park and its environs, was no longer a secret. Hortense had been the first to guess it. She had mentioned it with feeling to Jerome. Both approved of the marriage. Since Jerome was a widower, all that remained was to secure King Louis's consent. And he might be counted on to oppose. The misanthrope of Florence, a recluse surrounded by his medicines, would, no doubt, raise objections based on lack of fortune. Though he took but little interest in a son whose paternity he often had denied, he seldom, where Louis was in question, allowed the chance of thwarting Hortense and asserting his own authority to pass. Yet the lovers, if needs

be, would resign themselves to patience. They had vowed to wait for each other.

Jerome and Mathilde had come from Stuttgart, where the young girl had been on a long visit to the relatives of her mother, good Queen Catherine. Hortense turned the conversation on the German courts, the King of Bavaria, her ally, her cousin Stéphanie de Beauharnais, dowager grand-duchess of Baden, kept a semi-prisoner in the old castle of Mannheim, and whom the travelers had seen in passing. Hortense was even more skillful than the Empress Josephine when it came to conducting a conversation.

"It is because Madame Campan gave me lessons," she would tell her intimates. "This perfect teacher insisted that the number of conversationalists should decide the subject of conversation. Were there twelve? Then one should discuss travel and literature. Eight? The fine arts, science, and inventions. With six, one could take up politics and philosophy. A foursome might venture to talk sentiment, the heart's fond dreams and romance. Two persons should only discuss themselves. . . ." Hortense amiably admitted having employed this excellent system. She would sometimes say:

"We did not expect so and so; all my plans are changed. I had meant to talk metaphysics; now we'll have to take up painting."

From Germany, drawn by the well-nigh invincible attraction exerted by that magnetic pole of all these exiles, their talk harked back to Paris. Mocquard, the advocate, the Queen's adviser in various matters, had just come from that city. He was an expected guest every year at Arenenberg, during the vacation season.

What was being said, what was being done in Paris? Was the government managing to adjust its difficulties? Was the current rumor that Louis-Philippe was about to authorize the Bonaparte family to reënter France really true?

The slightly built Mocquard, a former dandy, decidedly worn, who had settled down after having sown his wild oats, made a noncommittal reply.

Paris, so he said, was growing calmer after all the riots which had so nearly put an end to the July Monarchy. But the ministry was getting shaky. M. Thiers, who desired intervention in Spain in favor of Marie-Christine, had lost somewhat in favor with the King. The abrogation of the law of exile seemed highly improbable.

Commandant Parquin objected. He was a straightforward old soldier, passionately devoted to the Queen, whose reader Mlle. Cochelet (she had died but a short time before) he had married. He lived in the adjoining château of Wolfsberg, and came over every day to get his orders from Hortense and from her son with all the airs of a marshal of the palace.

"Ah, well, we'll know soon enough," said the Queen, calming him with a gesture. "We're not so badly off here on our 'Fool's Mountain.' Didn't you know that Arenenberg used to be called Narrenberg? It was the very place where I should have found a refuge, isn't that so, Jerome?"

Beneath her great ribboned straw hat, from which floated a single white feather—for even in the house Hortense always wore a hat—she smiled that light and almost childlike smile which she had inherited from her mother and the isles of the West Indies. She seemed

serene, and even happy. The years had in a measure consoled her for the loss of her oldest son. She had not forgotten him, but she rarely mentioned his name.

She turned to a dark young woman, bony, a trifle hunchbacked, whose eyes were sparkling—her godchild, Hortense Lacroix.

"Hortense, will you ring for tea?"

Louis had left the table and had come over to talk in subdued tones to Mocquard and Dr. Conneau. He was by now twenty-eight. Above his unusually high forehead his hair was dark, almost chestnut in color. His heavy lips were screened by a moustache and a small beard. His head seemed large, out of proportion to his short body. Yet collectively there was something engaging about his appearance. He was not a handsome young fellow, and yet he made a pleasing impression. He had inherited his mother's subtle charm.

"Monsieur Mocquard," queried Louis, "what are our friends doing? Do they think the time to act has come?"

The lawyer did not seem very enthusiastic.

"It will be best to wait a while, Your Highness. The Orleans, in spite of all their difficulties, are more firmly established than appears. They have the bourgeoisie, the business men, fear and money on their side. And that's a great deal; enough to ensure a long reign."

"But the people, they have no hold on them; they can never win their confidence, after their harsh repressive measures."

"Oh, the people . . . what can the people do? They do not vote."

"They cannot vote, no, but they know how to die on the barricades. They have been swept away by cannon

fire, but others will rise in their stead. You put no faith in the people, Monsieur Mocquard, and you make a mistake. They alone count in the final analysis. They will recall us, as you shall see."

Mocquard made a questioning gesture. The Queen, seated in her easy chair, was telling Mathilde anecdotes of the Tuileries. But her eyes never left her son.

She may have seemed a frivolous wife; she always had been an admirable mother. She had adored her children, had devoted herself to them like the humblest of peasant mothers. She had dressed and fed them, had made up games to amuse them, had taught them to read and to count, had watched beside their beds at night at the least sign of illness. She had enveloped them with an ardent, pliant, sensible tenderness which, nevertheless, was full of courage and honor. Louis especially, the only one who had continued to live with her, had become the aim and end of her existence, the object of her inquietude, her inexhaustible activity. Retaining in her maturity that Creole gentleness from which the essence of her grace was derived, still svelte, fragile in appearance, often very pale and coughing a little, in spite of this outward languor she was indefatigable. She took an interest in everything, wrote for hours at a time, painted, played the piano or the harp, went walking, helped the poor, received in her modest *salon* numerous visitors from all parts of Europe, but particularly from France, visitors of every kind and condition, with the nobility of a queen who hardly seemed uncrowned. And beneath all this, which was no more than the envelope of her life, she pursued her secret design, tenacious, patient, inveterate, the ambition to see her son reign, regain a throne, restore the Bonaparte

dynasty. She had brought him up as a prince, and now that she had no other child, she treated him as a sovereign to be. So long as the Duke de Reichstadt had been alive, she had not dared to look toward France. She thought rather, of an establishment in Poland, always ready to rise in revolt, perhaps even in Belgium, where Leopold of Coburg seemed slow in taking root, or else in Germany. The Emperor had made a deep and lasting impression in the Rhineland.

"Your name," she murmured in Louis's ear, "assures you a part, whether it be in old Europe or in the New World. Men are everywhere the same; in spite of themselves they revere the blood of a family which has possessed a great fortune. A name is the first payment on account that Fate bestows on the man whom she wishes to advance."

Now that the King of Rome had passed away he was merely a memory in France. He played no part in it. She loudly declared herself satisfied with her fate and a foe to any kind of adventure. Abroad she was believed. Only a single far-sighted spirit realized the truth. Cardinal Consalvi remarked to the Pope:

"There was only one man in Napoleon's family. He is caged, so none are left."

"Queen Hortense is left," answered Pius VII.

Fritz, the majordomo, brought in the tea. Hortense Lacroix poured. The sky had grown tempestuous. The wind swept about the house, built on a rocky promontory.

In the south the mountain-tops disappeared in the clouds. Mathilde brought her cousin a cup of tea. He held her to him, gently. He showed her the lake at the foot of the garden, which had turned steel-grey, with tiny

silver crests of wave. Encompassed by meadows and dark forests, the village of Arenenberg seemed to be lowering its humble rooftops beneath the wind-storm.

The Queen had had the two big Carcel lamps on the chimney-piece lighted. The *salon* was warm and cheerful, breathing a delicate intimacy. A gilded harp, an easel lent it an air of elegance. Two admirable canvases by Gros recalled the dazzling past. One was Josephine at Malmaison, pensive in a muslin robe, while the opposite panel showed Napoleon at Arcola, a portrait in which —in order that the General might pose for a moment without moving—Josephine had clutched her husband by the knees. At the back, between two portières withdrawn, could be seen the billiard-room where Jerome and Commandant Parquin had started to play, smoking long cigars. The Queen pretended to like the odor. Above all things she wished people about her to feel at home.

She had seated herself at the piano, at the request of her niece, and in a tender and somewhat feeble voice she sang some lines from one of her romances:

"You're leaving me to follow glory's road,
My sad heart follows you wherever you go. . ."

The storm passed, and by degrees daylight returned. Louis, who had continued his conversation with Mocquard, glanced at his watch, and leaving the advocate with a word of apology, approached his mother, walking with a horseman's rather heavy tread.

"I'll see you by and by, at dinner," he said; "I'm going up to work."

And stooping over the Queen he murmured:

"I'm expecting Persigny."

The Queen pursed her lips. Hortense Lacroix, in her shadowy corner, raised her loyal eyes.

"You do not need me, Louis?"

"Thanks, dear Hortense, not this evening. But to-morrow I shall have to get you to help me."

For some years past they no longer thee-thoued each other. She was his boyhood friend. The daughter of the Queen's confidential maid, she had shared Louis's first games and studies. Supremely intelligent and mentally clear-sighted, frank and quick, she adored the Prince, acted as his secretary and often as his Mentor. She was, perhaps, aside from his mother, the only person who knew him well. Mme. Salvage, who was jealous of her, called her Minerva.

Louis bowed courteously to his mother and smiled at Mathilde.

* * *

He lived in a small detached pavilion which he jokingly called "The Hermitage of Saint Napoleon." There he occupied the same rooms he had used as a child. They contained neither rugs nor armchairs; only white wooden shelves, laden with books, and cheap furniture. Yet since he had come to manhood he had there collected all the souvenirs of his uncle he could lay hand upon. The wall paper disappeared beneath Napoleonic maps, arms, portraits, and decorations. As soon as one entered, these humble rooms so replete with history made an impression of mysterious grandeur.

Louis seated himself in a wicker chair, before his table.

It was there that his tutor, Le Bas, had made a man of him.

Louis was vacillating and indolent from birth. He was

averse to effort, always absent-minded. He would not even play at soldiers. A little running about in the park, an occasional tussle with Hortense answered his needs. He had been one of those small boys with their faces everlastingly pressed against a window-pane, apparently not bored, yet seemingly never amused. After having entrusted him to Abbé Bertrand, a gourmand and a scoffer, who was happy in dining- or drawing-room, but who yawned in the schoolroom, his mother had cast about for a firmer guiding hand. Philippe Le Bas, the son of the former Conventional, was to Louis what Fénelon was to the Duke of Burgundy. He availed himself of Louis's very faults to induce him to study. He took up the boy's education anew, from the beginning, subjected him to strict discipline, isolated him from sceptical conversation, from too rich a diet, and arranged for him a modest existence adapted to his requirements, one wise, sane, and varied, which, little by little, had roused him from his dreaming.

No doubt this change was in the main superficial. Louis worked harder. Yet he retained his calm, obstinate disposition, peculiarly inclined to revery. One divined in him a hidden realm to which none were admitted.

Later, still under his preceptor's supervision, he had attended the courses of the St. Anna Gymnasium, in Augsburg. His curriculum was broad in scope though full of gaps. He had a very good knowledge of Italian and English. During the four years which he spent at the university he had spoken only German. His French was labored. His phrases had a German turn and accent. But he wrote rather well. And he liked to write. Far more than he liked to talk.

Since the terrible return from Italy he had buried himself in his books to forget his grief. He had published two little essays which he called: "Political Reveries" and "Political and Miltary Considerations on Switzerland." Every day he attended artillery instruction at the Thoune camp, and there, in his final study period, had been awarded a provisional captaincy. He showed that he was proud to be an artillery officer—like Napoleon. Nevertheless, he had not merely followed his wishes in establishing this contact. He was genuinely interested in the scientific branch of thé service and, in fact, passionately fond of the sciences. He kept in touch with every new invention. "I would have liked to have been an engineer," he often said. At the beginning of the year he had published a "Manual of Artillery" which, according to those qualified to judge, was not devoid of merit.

Little by little he had committed himself to an extensive correspondence with the Republican and Bonapartist leaders, then united in a common hatred against the July monarchy. Thus his ear was attuned to all that was going on in France, of whose every changing breath he was more keenly aware than if he had been established on her soil.

Nor, like his mother, was he occupied with France alone.

Recently a delegation of Polish patriots had offered to make him the leader of a new insurrection. He had declined. "Warsaw is too far away," he concluded: "We are no longer living in the days of Henri III."

In his eyes Louis-Philippe was merely a transitory lodger in the Tuileries, an under-tenant. A bourgeois king, without roots in the past, he was, even in the eyes

of his own lieges, no more than a kindly man, a good father and husband, lacking greatness, minus real strength, and one whom the country might reject almost any day.

A disillusioned Warwick, M. de Lafayette had come to Arenenberg. Opening his wrinkled eyes, he had said to Louis:

"I have bitterly repented for all I helped to do in 1830. And I engage you to take advantage of the first opportunity to return to France. This government will be unable to maintain itself. So be daring. I will aid you with every means in my power."

Yet what was this offer of a man as changeable as he was generous worth? Louis did not question it. The fact that this old man with the glorious name who had played so great a part in so many different revolutions now turned to him was calculated to inflame a soul which already was anything but cold. And subsequent happenings seemed to endorse Lafayette's words. The revolutionary spirit, for a moment held in check, burst out again and again in revolt, the regicide was busy—after Aliband came Fieschi. Paris continued to growl, like a half-broken dog; Lyons had risen; the Vendée was effervescent; the secret societies were gorged with new members and subsidies; the working classes were wretched and irritated; the wealthy disquieted; the aristocracy sulky; the bubbles of the tremendous fermentation which was splitting all France were rising. Louis-Philippe, his hands outstretched before him like a blind man, trembled with fear at every step he took.

The nation had wanted a democratic monarchy in 1830. Yet now the Chambers were no more than a crowd

of functionaries and courtiers. A bare two hundred thousand electors constituted the country, legally speaking. Thirty-four millions of Frenchmen were no more than shadow-citizens. Would they put up with it much longer?

Since the fall of the older Bourbon line the Napoleonic Legend, making headway unperceived, had invaded France. After the return from the island of Elba came the ideal return from Saint Helena. Yet this time the Emperor was irresistible because he was dead. Flasks, pipes, handkerchiefs, and jewels were ornamented with his effigy. There was no lip that did not quiver when Austerlitz was mentioned. The days of mourning were past. His despotism was forgotten. All that was remembered was his glory. For the majority of Frenchmen Napoleon was only the son of the Revolution, the avenger of the people, the soldier of liberty.

Louis had been sensible of the power of this magic whose tide rose with never an ebb, when, fleeing from the Austrian bayonets after his adventure in the Romagna, he had ventured, together with his mother, to pass through Paris incognito.

Ill, reclining in his room in the Hôtel de Hollande, on the Place Vendôme, on May 5, 1831, the tenth anniversary of the Emperor's death, he had, from his window, watched an enthusiastic multitude pile flowers at the foot of the Column. The sight had left a glimmering spark in his heart.

Ah, had he only been the Emperor's son, that King of Rome of whom poets dreamed, that young archangel draped in an illustrious misfortune, for whom the tears of so many mothers had flowed, then all would have been

quick and easy! But Louis was merely a nephew. Only the heads of the Bonaparte clan—divided among themselves, incidentally—knew who he was, and at that paid but slight attention to him. France did not know him at all. She was not aware that in an out-of-the-way Swiss village, a few feet from the frontier, there dwelt an heir to the ideas and rights of Napoleon. France would have to realize this. It was necessary to renew the Bonaparte tradition, to attach the stupendous past to his own youthful and shadowed destiny.

Louis undertook this mission with a gladness that knew no bounds. He was ready to devote his life to it. He had entire confidence in himself. He knew his limitations and his weaknesses. An inner and, as it were, more than human power sustained him. He was the choice of Providence. The intrinsic value of the tool hardly weighed in the balance. He had been chosen, and that sufficed. He would succeed.

By dint of absolute self-dedication to the cult of the god of his race, the son of Hortense came to feel that he existed solely as his prolongation, as a new incarnation of his personality. He would grasp the plough where the Emperor had left it in the furrow. He would continue and rebegin him. He, too, yielding to the general enchantment, saw in Napoleon only the upholder of the people's rights, confronting the kings. At heart a democrat, Louis had said in his *Rêveries politiques*: "I would be a Republican if the Rhine instead of a river were an ocean." The butchers of the Holy Alliance had dismembered the countries. Louis wished to tear up the treaties of 1815 and, with the support of the oppressed nationalities, refashion a harmonious, equably balanced, un-

fettered Europe, in which France would receive her due—that is to say, first place. None other would do for the country of Napoleon.

These ideas, in which liberty, the happiness of nations and authority were singularly wedded, these ideas which Louis, in the best of faith, called "Napoleonic," were, above all, his own; they were the ideas of his time. They had slowly been ripened within him by his mother's deep and subtle influence, by his reading of philosophy, sociology, and economics, by his day-dreams, his table-talk, and his long walks in the mountains, and, finally, by long discussions—with Parquin, always enthusiastic; with Conneau, a faithful Pylades, ever ready to bear him company, no matter where; with Mocquard, more the sceptic and realist, his eyes open to danger; with Hortense Lacroix, with her soul of a Jacobin and Roman virgin. Yet chiefly with Persigny.

Victor Fialin, known as Persigny, was Louis's own age. Of undistinguished birth, a former non-commissioned officer, placed on the retired list for insubordination, he had lived a Bohemian life, scribbling in this, that, or the other connection. Had the *Mémorial de Sainte-Hélène* (his breviary) pointed out to him the road to follow? Or his ambition? He had sworn to become the Loyola of the Empire. He founded a little magazine, *l'Occident français,* of which, owing to lack of funds, only the first number appeared. He had come to Arenenberg for the first time some two years before. Queen Hortense had received him with mistrust, perhaps because she foresaw he would fascinate her son and draw him into a premature hazard of his fortunes.

How was Louis to save himself from this irradiance of

sectarian faith, so somberly eager? Persigny is pig-headed, quick to take offense, fantastic. But he has a passion for *service*. The device he has placed on the coat-of-arms his imagination has supplied is: *I serve*. He stoops to any and every task, becomes the Prince's messenger, his mouth-piece, his echo, his living point of contact with the Bonapartists and the "Reds." He hurries to Paris, to Orléans, to Strasbourg, to Baden, drumming up partisans, stirring up consciences, insisting to all those who seem to doubt or who treat an imperial restoration as a chimera, that the blood of the hero of Lodi and of Wagram lives again in this youth, impatient to restore the nation's honor, and worthy of becoming the Emperor of a new and radiant commonwealth.

He disappears for weeks at a time, then reappears, always full of ardor, never discouraged. The Prince shuts himself up with him for whole days. They talk in low tones, amid clouds of tobacco smoke, consult dossiers and maps, write letters in cipher. Their natures are as diverse as can be imagined, yet they have the same blind confidence in their star and the same need to conspire.

Louis is a conspirator born. Secret action is a psychic necessity for him. Perhaps he has inherited it from Hortense, who managed to be considered a frivolous woman, whereas her untroubled brow concealed a statesman's views and iron will. To plan some adventurous design with deceptive calmness, with an appearance of serenity, will always remain the supreme pleasure of this involute soul, which can only unfold alone. Carbonarism, with its mysterious initiation, its complicated ritual, has marked him with an ineffaceable imprint. A keen taste for taking risks, indulged in during the Italian insurrec-

tion, is a permanent acquisition. He is brave. His bravery is not that dashing French bravery whose accent is at times so lofty that it outranges the heroism of the ancients. It is a cold, almost somnolent, yet unfaltering courage. He feels not a single tremor before going into action, during those minutes of waiting when the heart searches itself and is at a loss, whether the searcher be Henri IV or Napoleon. Louis is always equal to himself. Once his plan has been made—and God knows he will have turned it over and over again—he carries it out, without a change, with mechanical regularity. He never yields a step, he never gives up.

Will an energy so constant yet so carefully hidden answer the purpose of one who dreams of changing the world? Louis will always remain mediocre in execution; he will always lack flexibility, he will not know how to retrace his steps, how suddenly to alter his views when confronted with the event, how to face the unexpected. Ah, if the conspirator in him were only doubled by the man of action! He has found men of action, and will continue to find them. Yet they will never take his place. No matter how devoted, no matter how adroit, they will either go beyond or fall short of what he wants. They will cause him to make mistakes. . . .

His faithful valet, Charles Thélin, scratches at the door —in accordance with the etiquette of imperial palaces. Then he opens it.

"Monseigneur, M. de Persigny has arrived."

"Good," says Louis.

And with a slow and tranquil step he goes to meet him.

Strasbourg

Hortense Lacroix, as is her custom every morning, ascends to the Prince's room. He had left the preceding evening to take part as an invited guest in a great *battue* in the neighborhood of Hechingen. He is to spend two days there. He had left Arenenberg by carriage, in Thélin's company. His mother had been uneasy at seeing him go, for each of his absences now tormented her. Louis joked about it:

"Wish me good hunting, mama. Come, now, what is there to fear? Don't I wear the most dependable of talismans?"

He turned the wedding ring of Napoleon, which the Queen some days before had asked him to wear, on his finger, as though it would guard him against every danger.

Since Louis is not present, the young girl can work without any one disturbing her. A lover of order, she straightens out papers and documents. There are many letters which should have been attended to before. When Louis returns it will only be necessary for him to sign them.

She seats herself at the table, covered with an old cloth and heaped with magazines and pamphlets. There are cigarette-butts in an ash-tray. There is dust on the writing-pad. She dusts it with her handkerchief, and starts to write. She answers addresses, demands for aid, etc.

She writes for a couple of hours. Then she stops. The silence—a surprising silence—weighs on her. That empty chair, facing her! Will Louis return in the evening? When he is absent she feels less ardent. A book lies open on the table. It catches her glance. *Les Révolutions romaines,* by the Abbé de Vertat. A passage is marked with a cross. Louis often pencil-marks his books in that way. Absent-mindedly she reads:

> Cæsar's young nephew is at Apollonia, on the coast of Epirus. . . . There he languishes, far from Rome, a prey to sorrow and regret—yet his ardent soul aspires to avenge his uncle's outraged memory, and soon, by a public demonstration, he reveals the goal of his ambition. His relatives, his friends, beg him to remain in exile. But young Octavius rejects this pusillanimous advice. He declares that he prefers to die a thousand times rather than deny Cæsar's great name and his glory. Condemned by iniquitous laws, he does not fear to brave those laws, and to disembark near the small town of Lupis with no other escort than his servants and a few friends, but sustained by the mighty name of Cæsar, which in itself alone was soon to provide him with legions and armies. In fact, no sooner had the officers and soldiers of Brindis learned that the nephew of Cæsar, their old general, was approaching their walls, than they came out to meet him in a crowd, and after having sworn allegiance to him, led him into the town and made him its master.

Hortense Lacroix gently pushes away the prophetic volume. Now she grasps it all. That which she long has dreaded, that which the Prince must have been hatching out in his endless conferences with Persigny, the terrible project on which he has staked his name, his freedom, and his head—Louis is about to undertake it. Her intellect is too clear to allow her to cherish a doubt; the Prince had marked that page for her to see, as a secret warning. Should she inform the Queen? No. It would

cause her vain anxiety. To stop Louis at this late hour is out of the question. First of all, where is he? At which point will he cross the French frontier? The die is cast. All will have to be left to Fate.

* * *

Led by Thélin, the carriage had first gone to Wolfsberg, where Commandant Parquin was waiting. Here a heavy trunk full of uniforms was taken in, and the former soldier of Napoleon seated himself beside the Prince, holding a casket full of goldpieces on his lap. The weather was cold and cloudy. The horses crossed the frontier of Baden.

They slept at Lehr, then, making a great detour, the berline turned back again toward the south, passing by way of Fribourg, and crossing into Alsace at Neu-Brissach, where the forged passports were not even examined. It went around Colmar, and taking the fine road along the Ill, moved on up to Strasbourg. It entered that city on the night of October 28, and was put into the carriage shed of an inn. On foot, the Prince and Parquin went to No. 7, rue de la Fontaine, to a room rented for them by Eleanor Gordon, Persigny's mistress.

She was a talented singer, the former wife of an English baronet, still handsome, though already past her meridian. She led a nomad existence, giving concerts from town to town. Energetic and mannish, she had devoted herself heart and soul to this enterprise of Louis Bonaparte. She loved him. They had met on various occasions in Constance and Baden-Baden, and she had not been unkind to him. The Prince was of an amorous nature, and Persigny, with respect to anything but politics, was complaisant.

Closely grouped in the small room and talking in low tones, Louis, Parquin, Persigny, and Mme. Gordon, until the break of dawn, for the last time discussed their project and determined its execution down to the least detail.

It was quite simple. Louis, during a recent visit to Baden, had rallied to his cause Colonel Vaudrey, who in Strasbourg commanded the 4th Regiment of Artillery (the First Napoleon's old regiment), and Laity, a young lieutenant of Engineers. They, in turn, had secured the adhesion of several officers, either already Bonapartists or moved by ambition. Surrounded by them, the Prince was to show himself to the soldiers and, by degrees, win over the entire Strasbourg garrison. Then, with the quite certain aid of the patriotic Alsatians, the city was to be seized and a provisional government set up. With a hundredfold increase of the first army nucleus due to the afflux of regiments seduced on the way, they would march to Paris, where an insurrection, long since prepared, would break out. How could there be any doubt regarding the final result seeing that the phantom of the Emperor would accompany the young man who bore his name and had invoked his fortune? The soldiers would flock to him with their standards, once they caught sight of him; the cities would rise; the eagle resuscitate would again wing his way from belfry to belfry to perch, a victor, on Notre-Dame.

All that had taken place upon the return from Elba was fated to repeat itself. An old, discredited king, with enervated troops, in a capital where the blood has scarce had a chance to dry, would be unable to resist Napoleon's nephew, thus suddenly appearing to demand an account-

ing of the honor of France. Like Louis XVIII, perhaps with even less dignity, Louis-Philippe would take to flight.

All day long on the twenty-ninth the Prince remained in hiding in the rue de la Fontaine, where Colonel Vaudrey visited him. When Louis tried to give him a contract guaranteeing his daughters a pension of ten thousand francs, the Colonel tore it up:

"I'll risk my skin, but I'll not sell myself," said he.

Louis embraced him.

That evening, together with Persigny, he went to the rue des Orphelins, to a ground-floor apartment, where his partisans had gathered. They were some twelve in number, many of them very young. Lieutenant Laity produced an eagle, that of La Bédoyère's regiment, hidden in 1815. The Prince kissed it, and it was passed from lip to lip. Several faces were streaked with tears. Louis's calmness did not desert him. He said a few words, trying to overcome his German accent: "He and his friends had entered upon a binding obligation. He was not activated by ambition. He had in view only the salvation of France. He was sure of success."

They set to work copying the proclamations with which the walls of the city were to be placarded. Louis, however, wrote two letters to his mother. In the one he announced his undertaking and its success, and in the other told her of its failure and bade her adieu. He confided both to Thélin, with instructions to see that, according to the event, she would receive the one or the other.

It was a long night. The posters copied, they put on the uniforms brought from Switzerland. Parquin became a brigadier general, Persigny a captain, Lieutenant

de Querelles, a commandant, the Prince an artillery captain. Laity invested him with the plaque and cordon of the Legion of Honor. A little champagne was drunk. A few logs were put on the fire. They had to wait for the dawn.

Slowly it filtered through the shutters. Six o'clock. A little later a trumpet, that of the Austerlitz barracks, sounded reveille. It made a deep impression—all turned pale.

Horses' hooves rang in the street. An orderly knocked at the door. Vaudrey sent word that he was expecting the Prince at barracks. One by one they passed out into the frozen day, moving between the sleepy houses. Querelles, at Louis's side, carried the eagle.

The gate of the barracks stood wide open. The whole regiment was ranged in company formation in the courtyard. Colonel Vaudrey, at the head of his men, catching sight of the Prince, drew his saber and shouted:

"Soldiers of the Fourth Artillery, a great revolution has begun! Here is the nephew of the Emperor Napoleon. He has come to place himself at your head, to restore to France the grandeur and liberty she has lost. Can Napoleon's nephew count on you?"

A tall, naïve soldier, still handsome under his head of silver hair, Colonel Vaudrey, a hero of Waterloo, is beloved of his men. Yet in their surprise, only a few shrill acclamations rise from the ranks. It is then that Louis, advancing and forcing a voice which rings strangely on that grey air through which snowflakes are whirling, says:

"Determined to vanquish or die for the French people, I have come first of all to you. For we are linked by great memories. It was in your ranks that my uncle, the

Emperor, served as a captain. It was with you that he won fame at Toulon. It was the Fourth Artillery which opened the gates of Grenoble to him on his return from Elba. Soldiers, gain the glory of being the first to initiate a great enterprise! Be the first to honor yourself by saluting the eagle of Austerlitz!"

He seizes the standard which Querelles holds out to him, and drawing still nearer to the ranks, he raises it in his arms, his head half-hidden by its folds.

"Behold the symbol of French glory! It must become the emblem of liberty as well. For fifteen years it shone above every battlefield. It has led our fathers to victory. It has passed through every capital of Europe. Soldiers, will you refuse to rally to this flag? Will you not march with me against the oppressors of our country?"

There is an outburst of cheers which spreads and rolls sonorously. The cannoneers brandish their shakos at the ends of their bayonets. The band, without prompting, strikes up the forgotten air:

Veillons au salut de l'empire.

"Follow me, men!" cries Louis.

And, with Colonel Vaudrey marching beside him, Querelles escorting him with the flag, he passes out of the barrack-yard, followed by the entire regiment.

It is six-thirty. All is going well.

Yet the Prince is about to commit a major imprudence. On the esplanade he halts his troop and divides it. One platoon is ordered to accompany Persigny and arrest the Prefect, another to see that his proclamations are printed; six others are detached to occupy the Town Hall, the principal buildings, the telegraph office, the bridges.

Hardly more than a third of the regiment remains. The march through the still empty streets is resumed. Windows open, disclosing the heads of alarmed burghers. Before the Military Divisional Bureau another halt is made. The guard presents arms and shouts, *Vive l'empereur!* General Voirol, hearing the noise, comes down the steps.

"General," says Louis, holding out his hand, "I am here as your friend. I did not wish to raise our old flag without the help of a brave man like yourself. The garrison has declared for me. Join us."

Voirol, already vaguely sounded by Persigny, and who has refused to give the Prince any assistance, does not allow himself to be carried away by this seditionary success. He sticks strictly to his orders.

"Prince," says he, "you have been deceived. I can prove it to you."

He turns to give an order to the guard. No doubt an order of arrest. Louis, anticipating it, has him surrounded by a picket of artillerymen, and sends him to his hotel in charge of Parquin.

And now the infantry must be won over. In quick march step, yet in good order, the troop presses on to the Finkmatt Barracks, near the ramparts, in the Faubourg de Pierre, where the Forty-sixth of the Line is quartered. By some odd misunderstanding the bulk of the troop is left behind, and Louis enters the barracks surrounded only by his friends and a platoon of artillerists.

The infantrymen run up and gather about the Prince. A chevroned sergeant of the Imperial Guard cries, "*Vive*

Napoléon!" and grasps his hand. Cries of sympathy are heard. But a lieutenant, Plaigniar, comes forward:

"They are lying to you, my friends! This man is not the Emperor's nephew."

The Prince has him seized. His soldiers, in order to rescue him, come to fisticuffs with the artillerists. The situation might be saved at the expense of a few shots. Louis forbids any shooting. Colonel Taillandier, commander of the Forty-sixth, arrives with his officers. At their command the men of the Line fix bayonets and surround the Prince and his partisans. The affray begins. The bulk of the Fourth Artillery, which had remained in the Faubourg, now enters the barracks. The men of the two regiments grapple. A crowd collects on the ramparts which overlook the military buildings, acclaims Louis Bonaparte and pelts the infantrymen with stones. Drums beat. Several pistol-shots terrify the horses, which rear and plunge.

Far more numerous, commanded by energetic officers, the men of the Line encircle the cannoneers, and force them back. Querelles, sword in hand, implores the Prince to flee; he will open a way for him. Louis, entirely calm and collected, refuses:

"I'll stay with my friends to the end."

He is seized. He is overpowered. The eagle falls. The cannoneers yield amid a tremendous uproar. Many take to flight. Meanwhile the drums beat the alarm through the streets of Strasbourg. The big cathedral bell sounds the tocsin. The intimidated crowd falls silent. Parquin arrives, his uniform in tatters. His prisoner, Voirol, has escaped.

For the nonce all is lost.

Louis, Vaudrey, Parquin, and their last defenders are led away to the guardhouse.

"Prince," declares Parquin, "we will be shot, but we'll die like brave men."

"Yes," replies Louis, "the affair has miscarried. And yet it was a noble venture."

He is separated from his comrades and, though treated with respect, put into solitary confinement in the new prison.

* * *

There he remained for eight days. He expressed no regrets. He merely waited, undismayed, for what would be decided with regard to him. He thought only of the fate of his friends, of his mother. The anguish she must feel was his sole chagrin; that she might censure him, his only fear.

She never dreamt of blaming him.

She meant to save him.

* * *

In Switzerland the rumor that Louis Napoleon had been proclaimed Emperor had no sooner begun to circulate than the Queen received the note announcing his arrest. At first she was distracted. She knew that Louis-Philippe was intelligence personified, but she had little faith in his generosity. Her son was in danger of death. Her last remaining son. Would they shoot him, after the travesty of a trial? She wept the whole night through, prostrated, appalled. The next morning, hardly able to walk, yet putting aside every objection, she entered her carriage with Mme. Salvage and left for Paris.

She did not venture to enter the city, fearing some manifestation which might ruin all. Instead, she stopped

for a few hours at the Château de Viry, the home of the Duchess de Ragusa. Mme. Salvage, in her name, was to go and plead with kindly Queen Marie-Amélie, and with the President of the Council, M. Molé, who formerly had been one of Hortense's courtiers. Mme. Récamier and her friends would also be active. But they were not put to much trouble. Louis-Philippe had already made up his mind. He wished to rob the Prince's tentative of all importance—for the very reason that he, himself, realized its gravity. The Strasbourg affair? A laughable bit of folly, a boyish trick, pardonable enough in an overexcited nature. The Prince's accomplices? A few hotheads. They would be tried; military discipline had to be observed. But they would be judged leniently. Incidentally, before being arrested, Mme. Gordon and Mme. Persigny had been given time to burn all the papers relating to the conspiracy. Louis Napoleon would simply be put aboard a French frigate sailing for America. He would not even be asked to promise to stay there. The government refused to take him seriously.

On November 9 he was brought to Paris in a postchaise. There his pardon was announced to him. That he should receive it so easily and so promptly made him weep with humiliation. At first he refused to write and thank the King. He only decided to do so in order to beg him to show a like clemency to his friends. Pride yielded to anxiety.

He was transferred to Lorient, without the consolation of seeing his mother, who was ordered to remove herself from French soil and, as the result of a shameless bit of blackguardism, was not apprised of the fate of her son.

Since Louis had no more money, the *sous-préfet* of

Lorient forced him to accept several rouleaux of gold on the wharf where he was about to embark. Duly informed, the newspapers took it up, some of them making the most outrageous comments.

The *Andromède* set sail on November 21, 1836.

Land of Liberty

For seventeen days the frigate, hampered by the storm, beat up and down the gulf of Gascony and the British Channel without being able to stand out to sea. At last she fixed her course for the Canary Islands. Louis, who thought they were headed for New York, and who was following her sailing closely, was surprised. The captain of the *Andromède,* M. de Villeneuve, however, informed him that at the 32d degree of latitude, on the ocean, he had opened his sealed orders, and that these instructed him "to take the Prince to Rio de Janeiro, but not to allow him to land and to prevent communications of any kind to pass to or from him. After having laid in whatever stores were necessary in Brazil, he was to carry him to New York." The government of Louis-Philippe had no breadth of view, but it understood details.

Louis resigned himself. For months he would be deprived of all news of his mother and friends. And his friends were probably paying dearly that very moment for their devotion to his cause. It was a hard trial he was compelled to undergo, but he did not betray it. For hours he walked the deck or leaned over the taffrail, between sea and sky, speaking only to the sailors busy about their work, who treated him with a certain spacious deference. He was probably alone with himself to a greater degree than ever before. He entered more definitely into the possession of his own soul, installed

himself therein, matured his concept of himself as the man of providence.

He has only one confidant—his mother. He writes her letters which can be forwarded only when they touch at Brazil. (The first will not reach Arenenberg until March 30.) To her he pours out his whole heart.

My dear Mama:

Every man bears within himself a world made up of all that he knows and loves, a world to which he returns without ceasing, even while his thoughts are with the world without. At present I do not know which is the more painful, to recall the misfortunes which have overtaken you, or the days of happiness that have departed.

Winter has passed and the summer has come again. The storms have been succeeded by gentle breezes, which make it possible for me to spend most of my time on the bridge. Seated on the poop, I pass in review all that has happened to me, and I think of you and of Arenenberg. A situation depends on the amount of liking one has for it. Two months ago my sole desire was never again to return to Switzerland. At the present moment, if I allowed my feelings free play, I would wish only to find my way back to my little room, in that lovely land where it seems I should have been so happy. Alas, when one has too sensitive a soul, one is forced to spend the days in the despondency of inaction or in the convulsions due to a condition of despair.

He asked for news of Mathilde. Since his arrest he had no word from her. Did she still think of him, she, for whose sake, imprudently, perhaps, he had risked the Strasbourg adventure? For he had thought, complaisantly, of topping her betrothal gifts with a crown. Would she wait for him, now that he was an exile? He was unhappy, but discouragement should never affect him. He noted down: "One may regret what has been lost without repenting for what one has done."

In January the *Andromède* made Rio. There she put

about again, gliding among the Antilles, not far from Martinique, where Josephine's grandson caught the scent of pines on the breeze. On March 30 the frigate reached Norfolk. Louis embraced the French sailors whom he was leaving, and, a free man, set foot on Virginian soil.

He found awaiting him a bit of news that filled him with joy.

His Strasbourg comrades had been acquitted by the jury; every one of them.

It was a verdict due to sentiment, one quite unforeseen and which confounded the accused, lawyers, judges, public opinion, and most of all the government—which could only scratch its head at this box on the ear.

Louis at once wrote warmly to Colonel Vaudrey, whom he had thought a dead man, begging him to remain his friend and to hope for better days.

In concluding, he added:

For two months, here in the tropics, catching the breeze that blows from Saint Helena, I have, alas, been unable to catch sight of the historic rock! Yet I always feel that the airs are bringing me those last words which the Emperor addressed to his companions in misfortune: "I have sanctioned all the principles of the Revolution, I have embodied them in my laws, in my deeds; there is not a single one which has not been consecrated by me; unfortunately conditions were serious. . . . France judges me with indulgence; she credits me with my intentions; she cherishes my name, my victories. Imitate her, be loyal to the ideas for which we have fought, to the glory we have acquired; beyond them lies naught but shame and confusion."

* * *

Upon his arrival in New York Louis was greeted by General Watson Webb, who secured a lodging for him, and paid him every attention. Thanks to this important

and distinguished personage, he was at once received as a friend in the homes of the socially most prominent families. He became acquainted with General Scott, the Reverend C. S. Stewart, Washington Irving, then already famous, the poet Fitz-Greene Halleck, Kent, the great lawyer, the Clintons, Schuylers, and Hamiltons. He rediscovered his cousins Achille and Lucien Murat, who were living on what their humble positions brought them. His best friend of the Italian days, Count Arese, rejoined him; and his faithful servant, Charles Thélin, together with funds, had brought him his mother's encouragement and advice.

Hortense, whom her son's banishment had dealt a blow from which she was never to rally, did not reproach him. She remained as devoted and tender as before, while all the Bonapartes ostentatiously drew aside the hem of their garments from the conspirator who had failed.

There was first of all his father, who sent him a severe reprimand. But even more severe were his uncles: Jerome, who saw his cozy dreams of a return to France fall in ruins; and Joseph, who accused him of having made any future return of the Empire impossible by his braggart bungling of his job.

These injustices, this jealousy—his relatives hated him for having attempted what none of them would have dared—cut Louis to the quick. Not only must he arouse a whole world, but his own people, the members of his clan who should have rejoiced that, owing to him, France had learned the Bonapartes still existed, disavowed him, rejected him as a simpleton, a fool! He tried to dissipate his bitterness by change of scene. Together with Arese,

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he traveled as far as Niagara Falls, hunted on the banks of the Delaware, and visited the home of George Washington at Mount Vernon.

Standing before his tomb he murmured to Arese:

"Westminster and Saint-Denis are filled with the cenotaphs of kings, but none of them are as imposing as this strip of turf."

He lingered on the borders of still virgin savannas, whose vast landscapes pleased his romantic soul. He was impressed by the ground-swell of illimitable forests, by rivers which seemed to be an extension of the ocean's self, by the fresh, salubrious atmosphere.

He estimated the prodigious future of this immense land awakening to civilization. For a moment he dreamt of establishing himself in this country, assuredly the freest in the world. He saw himself living in one of these great mansions, clearing vast tracts of land, drawing the utmost from his pastures, sowing wheat, becoming a farmer, the one remaining noble occupation, thought he, once the profession of arms has been forbidden. He dreamt of it a moment long. He would call on his mother to join him. They would be happy. Yet this inclination was but fleeting. He was not his own master. He was not a man who could choose the life he wished to lead. Destiny had chosen for him. He had to obey the voice of his race. To him was entrusted the future happiness of France. He loved America. He felt at ease there. But he would leave it.

He was to leave it even sooner than he had expected.

Dining with Dr. Stewart, he received a dispatch whose seal, excusing himself, he hastened to break:

It was a letter from his mother, long delayed. She wrote him that she had been very ill, that there had been talk of an operation, but that the idea had been abandoned, and that she was glad to escape the ordeal—no doubt she would regain her strength.

On the envelope were two words, secretly jotted down in the hand of the faithful friend of his youth, Dr. Conneau, who had remained with Hortense:

"Come, come!"

Louis Bonaparte rose from the table. In a low tone of voice he said:

"My mother is very ill. I must go back to her. I shall take the next boat leaving for England. Thence, with or without passports, at no matter what risk, I will cross to the Continent."

Hortense's delicate script betrayed no tremor. Her words were cheerful—courageous falsehoods. Louis sensed that his mother was at death's door. Between these two beings who loved one another so intensely, who for so many years had only lived one for the other, there were immaterial ties—attenuate, yet so powerful that they stretched across the Atlantic. Hortense was Louis's great love. He could love other women, many women, yet not one would make him forget for a single moment the perfect friend who, in spite of so much chagrin, so many disappointments, had never spoken to him save with tenderness and sympathy. None would efface from his memory the slender goddess of Arenenberg, with her flower-crowned hat who, chin on hand, seated by the fireplace, so often had revealed a thousand secrets to him with a single glance of her kind, dear eyes.

That very evening Louis wrote to President Jackson:

New York, June 6, 1837.

Mr. President.

I cannot leave the United States without expressing to Your Excellency the regret I feel in not having been to Washington to make your acquaintance. Although unhappy fate led me to America, I hoped to profit by my new exile to know her distinguished men. I wished to study the manners and institutions of a people who have made more conquests in commerce and industry than we have made in Europe by arms.

I hoped, under the ægis of your protecting laws, to travel through a country which has excited my sympathy, since its history and prosperity are so intimately bound up with the memory of our French glory; but an imperious duty calls me back to the old world. My mother being dangerously ill, and no consideration binding me here, I am going to England; thence I shall endeavour to repair to Switzerland. It is with pleasure, Mr. President, that I enter into these details with you, for you might have given credit to certain calumniating suppositions that tended to make people believe I had contracted engagements with the French Government.

As I value the esteem of the representative of a free country, I am glad it should know that, with the name I bear, it is impossible for me to stray one moment from the path which my conscience, my honour and my duty trace.

I beg Your Excellency to receive this letter as a proof of my respect for the man who occupies the seat of George Washington. Accept the expression of my consideration and of my distinguished sentiments.

Louis Napoleon Bonaparte

Last Days at Arenenberg

WRAPPED in the great white shawl which the Emperor Alexander had presented to her in Malmaison, in 1814, she was lying in the sunlight, on her invalid chair, her son at her feet. The little terrace, sheltered by a row of lime-trees, and affording a view of the whole Thurgovian countryside, outspread like a map in relief, retained the golden warmth of September. Not a word was spoken, as was often the case when they were together. Louis had a book on his lap, one of their old-time favorites, *Don Quixote,* but he was not reading. Hortense looked out on the slopes, covered with vineyards, the yellowing plains, the pine forests rising in tiers on the hills, like toy trees, the lake foreshortened in the vertical light, the little village houses nestling in a cove, some of their windows darting a diamond flash.

With a hardly noticeable movement her eyes sought Louis.

Her life, diversified and brilliant, had not been a happy one. Proud, kindly, devoted, generous and petty, vain, sensual and timid, wrapped up in herself, entirely human even in that grace which generations were to recall, she had been endowed with a soul admirably fitted to suffer. A destitute child, asleep on the Corsican's vertiginous buckler, she woke to find herself a queen and the belle of an animated court. Her fantastic husband had broken her on the wheel. And then love had caressed her trend

toward illusion and had nourished without contenting her heart. Yet how long does love last? Disasters and sorrows had visited her. Beneath the smile which was ever her flag, her heart, little by little, became lined with fissures. After Strasbourg it beat so feebly that too heavy a step, the song of a bird, threatened to break it.

Flahaut, the lover whom she had so greatly loved, and by whom she had had a son, had retired to England, whence he still wrote to her, off and on, like a respectful friend. Her oldest boy had died in the Romagna. Only Louis was left her. She would bequeath to him all those bruised and wounded chimeras which had recoiled upon themselves. She had sown, he should reap. Providence would repay him for her sighs and tears. This she knew. When Fate speaks so strongly within us, how can we question her voice? She had accomplished her task; now she could go. At least she would not vanish altogether. She had given her son so much of herself that she was sure of living anew in him. It is pleasant to know that another soul will prolong our own beyond the shadows. It was with this consoling thought in mind that she was passing.

Her features had been spared the stigmas of age. They had not grown older, though they were worn. Her face was delicately threaded, like an old portrait. A few touches of color on cheeks, mouth, neck, and hands. But all as though overcast by a vapor. And never had the charming Creole seemed more the queen. Death had guaranteed that she should enjoy her real nobility, her real crown.

She was aware of her condition. Some one, in her presence, having inadvertently mentioned Louis-Philippe's

discontent at the news that the American fugitive, in spite of a concerted refusal of passports, had succeeded in getting back to Arenenberg, she said, heedful that Louis should not hear:

"Why can't they be patient? They'll not have to wait much longer."

In the château were assembled Hortense Lacroix, Mme. Salvage, M. and Mme. Vieillard, Parquin, Arese, Conneau, her last remaining friends, watching her every movement, her every word, the approach of that Presence which drew nearer day by day. Her only nourishment was a few raisins and biscuits and some Constance wine. When Mme. Salvage asked her how she felt, she answered, almost gayly:

"Not badly. I think I'm feeling better."

She would have liked to deceive her son, but it was impossible. They knew each other too well.

One day, at her request, Louis left her to take a short walk. She called Conneau, and bade him sit down beside her. She held him in special esteem. He was not brilliant, but she knew he was loyal. He had retained the disinterestedness of youth. He was still a *carbonaro,* even, perhaps, a republican.

"Henri," she said (it was the first time she had called him by his first name), "Louis will need your friendship when I am gone. Will you promise me never to leave him?"

He gave her his hand, as though taking a vow. She took it and pressed it between her own hands, which had grown so thin.

"Thanks. Now I can rest more easily. You are one of those who do not change."

Often, when alone with her son, she talked to him of the past, of France, of the Emperor. She tried to remove from his mind all bitterness against the Bonapartes who, nevertheless, had so basely calumniated and betrayed her, who had treated her with such disdain. He was the political trunk of the imperial family, its actual head until Joseph's death would transfer the chieftainship to him as a right. He should aim at family solidarity, at least so far as others were concerned.

She had reached the stage when one takes into account only what predominates in human emotions and interests. This serenity, which she had attained only in her extreme weariness of heart, she would have liked to pass over to his own, still practically new and apt to beat for a long time.

She spoke indulgently to him about Mathilde. She should have come, no doubt of it. Yet had she found it possible? She was young, subjected to the often despotic wishes of a father who would henceforth be obstinately opposed to their marriage.

"I will never give my daughter to a rebel!" Jerome had cried the day after Strasbourg.

Hortense preached oblivion or, if not, forgiveness, which was easier. Was Louis much disappointed at this rupture which he must accept as definitive? Did he really expect to suffer because of it? After all, it had been no more than cousinly sweethearting. . . .

He agreed, to please her, though his throat choked on his "yes." His feeling for Jerome's daughter had been tender and true.

Assuredly, continued the Queen, Mathilde would have been a wife worthy of him. Yet in her absence, he would

have no difficulty in selecting a companion. The Grand-Duchesse of Baden, Stéphanie de Beauharnais, still had a daughter.

Louis shook his head in refusal. The Princess Marie, Stéphanie's oldest daughter, had pleased him, several years ago. But now she was married to the Duke of Hamilton.

"A Hohenzollern princess?" No. He had no one in view. He would see, later on. But Hortense was gently insistent. There was Mlle. de Séréville, their charming neighbor, daughter of the Marquise de Crénay, to whom he had been very attentive for a long time—before Mathilde came? She smiled. Once more Louis said no, and smiled as well. Yet the next moment his thoughts harked back to Mathilde and his eyelids closed, while he said nothing for several minutes.

She changed the subject. She spoke of their visits to Armenonville, six years before, when, passing through France, after the Italian insurrection, they had enscribed their names on the tomb of Rousseau, one of their idols.

"Do you remember, Louis?"

And once more they saw each other, on the island, seated near the sarcophagus, while the leaves of the giant poplars rustled above them with a never ceasing murmur, and swans floated through the green water before their eyes.

"I, too," she had said, "O later on, much later!—I would like to rest in France. Who would forbid it? Only the living are exiled."

* * *

The months which followed upon her death, while accompanied by the Count de Tascher and Mme. Salvage,

poor Hortense—to whom, in fact, France was once more open—took the road to Rueil, where Josephine had been awaiting her since 1814, Louis passed in the Castle of Gottlieben. Close to Arenenberg, it was an old feudal keep, the former prison of John Huss and Pope John XXII. Hortense had bought it as a concession to that taste for chivalry she had always cultivated and, bit by bit, when her purse permitted, had had it repaired. Louis could no longer bear to live at Arenenberg; Hortense was omnipresent there. Everything recalled her, and everything lacerated his heart. He was feverishly active trying to finish laying out Gottlieben, absorbed by manual labor, in the midst of his workmen. Conneau stayed with him. Parquin came over every day from Wolfsberg. Persigny, Laity, Vaudrey were very often there. So the winter went by and, little by little, the young man's spirit grew calmer. The persecutions of the French Cabinet offered a by no means negligible diversion for his chagrin.

Louis-Philippe had charged his ambassador at Berne, the Duke of Montebello (Lannes's son), to demand the expulsion of Napoleon's nephew from the federal government. He had the effrontery to base his demand on the Vienna Treaty, which had not been invoked by the Bourbons of the senior branch. The Canton of Thurgovia objected. Louis was a favorite there. The peasants, the herdsmen of the countryside, had known him from childhood. Their gaze had often followed his familiar figure, thickset and short-legged, on the mountain slopes. His mother and he for years had distributed alms. And, besides, Switzerland welcomed refugees; she did not drive them away. The French minister grew more and more stubborn. Armand Laity, one of the principals acquitted

in Strasbourg, had recently published an "Account of the Events of 1836." Due far more to Louis's than to his own pen, it essayed to prove that far from being a foolhardy venture, the Strasbourg affair had been maturely considered, well conceived, and very capable, if certain unfortunate accidents had not ruined its hopes of success, of placing at the head of France a Prince whose future even M. de Chateaubriand had acknowledged, in the event of the Duke of Bordeaux's death.

The Molé Ministry denounced Lieutenant Laity to the Chamber of Peers. There was a silly trial—a new clarion call in favor of Louis Bonaparte. Laity was condemned to five years' imprisonment, an excess of severity which betrayed the rage of those in power.

Again the Duke of Montebello menaced Switzerland. Twenty thousand men massed on the frontier were an earnest of armed intervention. But the honor of small states is not always proportionate to their size. Switzerland did not yield. But Louis wrote the *Landamman* that he would leave the country of his own accord, in order not to subject it to the miseries of an invasion. He requested passports for England.

Thanks to the animosity of the Molé Cabinet, composed of men of little vision, Louis Bonaparte's moral situation had been transformed in the course of a few months. The adventurer of 1836, the butt of jokes, had become a pretender who awakened sympathy, in whom many hearts were secretly interested. The newspapers were full of his name. Europe accorded him an altogether novel degree of consideration. A little later Louis-Philippe was biting his nails:

"What folly, what folly!" he repeated.

It was not the last folly to be perpetrated.

* * *

Louis's friends attended to the preparations for his departure. The *Mémorial de Sainte-Hélène* was lying open on the table. Conneau asked whether it were to be added to the books he was taking to England.

"It is needless," said Louis; "I know it by heart."

For the last time he went to Arenenberg.

In accordance with the orders he had given, all had been left in its former state. He went up to the Queen's room. Hitherto he had not dared to enter it. Today he felt it was his duty to do so. He hesitated on the threshold. The room was full of shadows. He opened a window, pushed back the shutters, took a few steps. At the back was her bed. . . . He turned away. On a small easel stood an unfinished painting, in which Hortense had tried to limn her mother's features, after a miniature by Isabey. On a mahogany couch, covered with a dark red and black stuff, there lay one of those hoods of which she had been fond, and which lent her such an air of youth. The mantelpiece was ornamented with a small clock which had come from Malmaison; it showed a West Indian slave-girl being freed by her master.

He examined the furniture, piece by piece. The large Dutch chest of drawers held mementoes of his infancy and of his two brothers—toys, the little dress of blue velvet and the lace collarette which he had worn at the wedding of the Emperor and Marie-Louise, an herbal. He passed to the desk, lowered its lid, and from the drawers which Hortense had so often opened in his presence, he took some things she had cared for above all others:

Josephine's coronation ring, the tricolor scarf Napoleon had worn at the battle of the Pyramids, the officer's cross of the Legion of Honor which, at a later date, he used to pin to his simple uniform of a colonel of the Guard, and, finally, an odd jewel: the amulet of Charlemagne. Hortense had regarded it with superstitious reverence. Holding it in his hand, Louis looked at it for a long time, this pendant of sapphires and pearls which, enclosing a fragment of the True Cross, had been sent—so legend declared—to Charlemagne by the Caliph Haroun-al-Raschid, together with the keys of the Holy Sepulchre. He had worn it his life long, and for several centuries after his death it had been left on his breast. In 1804, when Josephine visited the Rhine provinces, the cathedral chapter of Aix-la-Chapelle had given it to her to wear at the Coronation. Before he left for Saint Helena, Napoleon, who had never relinquished it, entrusted it to Hortense.

A sort of bookcase was filled with sketchbooks, the Queen's water-colors, her music, the lyrics which all the poets of Europe had inscribed to her in the happy days. On the upper shelves were bundles of papers, political and business. Hortense had been a great collector of such things. The most important already had been removed to a place of safety. Yet many letters still remained. Louis burned them in the fireplace. They were letters from the Emperor, from Josephine, and from Madame Mère, the Emperor's mother, from King Louis, from his own brother Napoleon. Before consigning them to the flames he glanced through them and withheld certain ones. His eyes were shadowed. For a long time, not daring to open it, he held in his hand a little book, bound in black

leather, in which he knew the Queen had set down her private memoranda. It was meant for him.

"When I am gone, you are to have it," she had told him, toward the end. "It is for you alone."

At length he opened it—saw sentences jotted down without sequence. There were dates, joyous or sorrowful, followed by a few words, at times crossed out again. Then thoughts, ideas. Were they merely detached reflections or were they advice? Here Hortense had fixed on paper all that she had so often reiterated to her son when they spoke of France. He even found ideas which she had never expressed verbally, and which surprised him by their penetrant tone, their keen common sense, their loftiness of political thought. There were phrases, previsions which only a queen could have felt. Did a crown, no matter how ephemeral, thus deeply mark the brow on which it rested?

"You are a prince, do not forget it. . . . Yet your title is of recent date; in order to compel respect for it you must first of all show that you are able to be of service. . . . If the people are those who suffer, show them that you are one of them, a man oppressed.

"Receive every one; turn no one away, not even the curiosity seeker, the man with a scheme: they all may be useful.

"The rôle of the Bonapartes is to play the part of the whole world's friends. They are mediators.

"We should never wear ourselves out trying to prove that the Emperor was infallible and that his every action had some valid national motive. Do not fail to publish far and wide, but in general terms, that he made France powerful and prosperous, and that each of his conquests

gave Europe institutions whose loss must ever be deplored. . . . In the end one believes what is told one over and over again.

"In France one can easily get the upper hand in a discussion by invoking history; no one has studied it, but every one believes in it. It is easy enough to arrange it to suit one's purposes.

"I have said to you: watch the horizon. There is no comedy nor drama which, enacted while you watch, cannot supply you with some reason to intervene like a god of the stage.

"Do not show yourself openly until the opportune hour strikes."

And then, worthy of Machiavelli, this coldly audacious line:

"The world may easily be twice snared with the same noose."

He read slowly, while around him, clinging to the hangings, to the rugs, breathed that warm fragrance the Queen had diffused. Outside he could hear the rain and the wind. The despoiled countryside was drowning to their murmur. In the fireplace a few flames still licked the blackened sheets which, in days gone by, had felt the touch of a noble, cherished hand. Now and again some piece of furniture creaked, and Louis trembled as though a gown had brushed him in passing.

He opened a casket whose key Hortense, up to the hour of her death, had worn around her neck on a golden chain. It contained further letters tied with a ribbon. On them was written: "To be burned."

Louis took them with a confused feeling in which reverence was mingled with a vague jealousy. This slim packet

held her feminine secrets, the joys and torments of her passionate heart. He placed it upon the andirons. And of the loves of Hortense, like Hortense herself, naught but ashes remained.

It was then that this room in which she had lived, dreamed, suffered and, in spite of all, had hoped, seemed to him to be dead as well. Suddenly all within it appeared extraverted, evanished, unconnected with the actual. The very furniture became shadow-forms. The air which Louis breathed was smothered in silence. The only living thing which kept him company was what rested on his knees, the slender volume in which Hortense's soul had left the imprint of its tide, as it rose and ebbed. He put it in his pocket, noiselessly closed the shutters, and left the room on tiptoe.

English Exile

Lord Kirkwell to Sir Warren Bryce,

January 11, 1839

"I feel sorry for you, dear friend, to think that you must keep away from London for so long a time because of your health. The season, though quite deadly in the beginning, has suddenly become extremely brilliant. The weeks are not long enough for all the parties. On one and the same evening I have had to attend six receptions and balls. And do you know who is the lion of the day? 'Old Beau Brummel,' you'll answer. Not at all; he has grown ugly and dirty, and has lost his mind. 'The Count d'Orsay?' By Jove, you might have been right—yesterday. But today the lion is an eaglet, the most engaging, most agreeable of our old enemy 'Bony's' nephews, the Prince Louis Napoleon Bonaparte.

"I have been told that when, as a child, he heard of his uncle's death, he swore eternal hatred to England. He seems to have gotten well over it. The truth is that he has been shown so many civilities here that it would be decidedly ungrateful on his part if for the nonce he did not like the English—and their wives and daughters as well.

"He arrived in London, coming from Switzerland, with seven or eight friends, some among them vulgar enough; but two of whom, Colonel Vaudrey and Viscount Persigny, appear to be quite gentlemanly fellows. One might have

thought he would have stopped with his uncle, ex-king Joseph of Spain, who maintains a sort of minuscule court here; but it is said that they are on the outs and that their relations are extremely tenuous. Prince Louis has rented Lord Cardigan's house in Carlton Terrace, and has established himself there very comfortably, sparing no expense. He must be well supplied with funds. And if he had no money of his own, he would have no difficulty in finding those who would loan it to him.

"No sooner had he arrived than the town was swept with a great wave of curiosity and good will for him. The Court, for diplomatic reasons, has maintained an attitude of reserve, but society has received the Prince in the most obliging way. The newspapers have devoted a great deal of attention to him, to his visits and his tastes. When he leaves his house, on foot or by carriage, a crowd gathers to greet him as he steps out of the door. All the fashionable clubs have made him an honorary member. All people vie with each other in giving suppers and hunting-parties in his honor. He is a good horseman and takes a great interest in the races.

"Incidentally, he has old connections and friends here: the Duke of Hamilton, who married his cousin, Marie of Baden, and, moreover, our mad, romantic, delightful Lady Blessington, whom he had formerly met in Rome, as well as the Greys, the Douglasses and the Eglingtons. But his social circle is growing larger day by day. The whole peerage pretends to have known Queen Hortense; so it is the mode to make much of her son. He lends himself to this obsession with a good deal of grace. On every occasion he carries with him a gentle affability and natural courtesy which make Lady Holland declare 'If his

legs were only a trifle longer he would be a Prince Charming.'

"He is short, it is true. I saw him yesterday, at Somerset House, where the Duchess, your old flame, was giving a dinner in his honor. He's short, as I have said, his head is large, he is four-square in build, and he tramps like a dragoon. In dress he is the perfect dandy: a close-fitting blue frock-coat, worn open over a velvet waistcoat, and tight pantaloons with trouser-strap. It is quite becoming to him. Lord Oxford presented me and I talked with him for a moment. We spoke of Austria and of his unfortunate cousin, the Duke de Reichstadt, who is said to have bequeathed to him the very sword Napoleon wore at Austerlitz. He invited me to call on him at Carlton Terrace, and I shall certainly do so.

"As I had been assured in advance, I found that he had a certain charm. But I would be unable, dear friend, to tell you just wherein it consists. The Prince, like his mother, is nonchalant, with occasional darts of vivacity. One feels that he is both kind and generous. Yet there is something more. He excites special interest, I think, because of the serene, hidden belief in his future which one glimpses in him.

"Sir Bulwer Lytton told me the other morning: 'Louis Bonaparte is a remarkable man, no matter what his enemies may say. His ideas show breadth and power. He knows when to hold his tongue and when to act. He will make mistakes, due to pride or to imprudence, but he will be able to retrieve them by good will and enthusiasm. When one is certain of one's self, it is rare indeed that one fails to accomplish something great.'

"This young man—he is hardly more than thirty—does

not seem to doubt for a moment that, in a short time, by special fiat of the Almighty, he will set up Napoleon's throne again in France. In private the simplest and most modest of human beings, as soon as he appears in public he takes precedence of everyone, like a sovereign. He often alludes to the reforms which he expects to inaugurate when he wears the crown. We shouldn't laugh too much at it, my dear Warren; these devilish Frenchmen are capable of anything.

"It is Lady Blessington's home, Gore House, that fairy palace where millions of pounds go up in smoke, that Prince Louis frequents the most. Our fair friend's *cicisbeo,* Alfred d'Orsay, has become his intimate. He has started to work on his bust. It goes without saying that it will be an atrocity, for d'Orsay has only one accomplishment: he knows how to dress. At tea-time, in his magnificent studio, the Prince is surrounded by artists and literary folk: the novelists Dickens and Thackeray, Macready the tragedian, Thomas Moore, the poet, the painter Landseer, the French writer Alfred de Vigny, who is kept in London by the settlement of the estate of Bunbury, the eccentric, who was his father-in-law. You were acquainted with him, if I'm not mistaken.

"Gossip insists that several of our leading beauties have made marked advances to the Prince. I can't say how much of it may be true. But it is certain that nothing about Louis Napoleon suggests the Trappist. He appreciates a skirt, as they say across the Channel. I'd not be surprised to hear that he is already on the most intimate terms with Miss Howard, a youthful star just rising to the first place in our galaxy, who is driving all our dandies mad. It is also whispered that he is far

advanced in the good graces of his cousin, the Duchess of Hamilton. . . ."

* * *

This life of distinguished dissipation, which he now encountered for the first time, was advantageous to Louis in various ways. To begin with, it numbed his filial sorrow. It also gave him a certain measure of worldly importance in the eyes of European society, and, as it were, a species of aristocratic consecration which heretofore had not been accorded him. Finally, it was calculated to mislead the French government, which had him under surveillance through Guizot, its ambassador (Guizot, incidentally, though an excellent doctrinary, was a wretched spy).

Aside from all else, it amused him. There existed in Louis a certain latent gayety which, at the given moment, sought to express itself. Nevertheless, behind his pleasures, deployed as a curtain, Louis was active in a serious way. Just as he had wished to understand Switzerland, her social order, her army, her industries, he meant to profit by his sojourn in England to impenetrate himself with the spirit of the English, perhaps the farthest removed from the French in feeling, and who, since the passing of Rome, had established the most extravagant, composite, admirable, and permanent empire in the world.

He visited the docks, the navy-yards, the Woolwich Arsenal, where he was received with "respect" (so the papers said), by the governor and his officers. Then, already preoccupied with industrial questions, he went to Lancashire, at the time the greatest manufacturing center in the world, and visited Manchester, Liverpool, and Birmingham. Back again in London, he worked assidu-

ously, aided by Persigny, Vaudrey, and Conneau, who acted as his secretaries. He read all the newspapers, all the pamphlets sent him from France, and kept in touch, and that in detail, with the labors of parliament. He wrote articles, anonymously or over Persigny's signature, and by sequential correspondence reknit the too relaxed threads linking the Bonapartes among themselves. Frequent reports about French, Italian, and Polish secret societies were sent him by friends on the Continent. He carefully annotated and arranged them. He also endeavored to modify his voice. It was not a French voice; it had made an almost shocking impression at Strasbourg. As Persigny put it, with his usual brutal frankness: "He has a German accent." So every morning he read aloud to Conneau, who corrected his pronunciation, a few pages of Voltaire or of de Montesquieu. It was not that they were favorites of Louis's, but they seemed to him best adapted to form his elocution and lighten his style. This practical discipline yielded tangible results. He wrote with more facility, with less emphasis, and, little by little, rid himself of all his Germanisms.

His best thought he embodied in a work which he had long been planning, one which was to be for France the charter of the régime to come, and for Europe the alarm signal for the nations groaning beneath the yoke.

The almost mystic profundity of the *Idées Napoléoniennes*, caused astonishment when they appeared in 1839. In them Louis Bonaparte spoke of the founder of the dynasty as though he were a god whose altar he meant to rebuild. From out of the acts, words, and plans of Napoleon he drew up articles of faith, a doctrine destined to save the world.

Great men share with divinity the privilege of never altogether dying. Their spirit survives them, and the Napoleonic idea sprang from the tomb at Saint Helena, just as the moral of the Gospel rose triumphant despite the agonies of Calvary. Political, like religious faith, has had its martyrs; similarly it shall have its apostles; and shall inherit its kingdom.

The Napoleonic spirit undertook to reconcile popular liberty with order and authority. Primarily it assured peace to Europe by the normal expansion of ethnic groups. The governments would at last unite to bestow upon the peoples that happiness for which they had been waiting so long that they thought it chimerical. The shameful gangrene of pauperism would be arrested, thanks to the working classes' gradual acquisition of property. The waste lands would be distributed to them. The arbitrary rule of patrons would disappear. Free exchange would render life spacious, easy, simple, harmonious.

The Napoleonic idea is not a martial idea, but a social, industrial, commercial, humanitarian one. If to some it still seems perpetually surrounded in the thunderbolts of combat, it is because, in very truth, it has too long been enveloped in the cannon-smoke and dust-clouds of battle. Yet today these clouds have dispersed, and beyond their martial glory may be seen a civil glory greater and more durable.

Let the manes of the Emperor, this being so, rest in peace. His memory gains in greatness with every passing day. Every wave that breaks against the rock of Saint Helena brings with it a breath of Europe, an homage to his memory, a regret to his ashes, and the echo of Longwood repeats above his tomb: "Everywhere the nations freed toil to do your work over again."

Grandiloquent? Yes, but that is the tone of the age. Louis admires Lamennais. And his cult for the Emperor, that childish adoration nourished by Hortense, fanaticized

by trials and exile, have given him a visionary's soul. How could the nephew, the modern Cæsar's heir, help but be aroused, carried away by that tremendous thrill which shook all France when, as an artful trick, hoping to occupy public opinion by the gift of an innocuous ghost, M. de Rémusat announced to the Chambers the return of Napoleon's ashes?

The Prince de Joinville, Louis-Philippe's son, sets sail for Saint Helena to bring back the promised casket to the Invalides. An unheard-of triumph awaits the Emperor in that Paris forbidden his family. What more favorable moment could Louis find at which to launch his firebrand? Yet Louis-Philippe, deceived by his agents, sees in it no more than an anodyne manifesto, a pamphlet which none will recall in a few weeks' time. The supposition of this wise, calculating King is that the lesson of Strasbourg has served its purpose, that though Louis might still speak presumptuously, he would not act again, at least not for a long period.

Yet Louis in London, beneath his mask of a man about town, thinks only of action. The recollection of Strasbourg does not make him weaken; it encourages him. He thinks, and his friends are of the same mind, that Strasbourg very nearly fell into their hands. And that is so. With a little better luck, they would have made themselves masters of the city, and, doubtlessly, of Alsace, a province where the images of the Revolution and the Empire invariably move every heart. This idea obsesses them. They no longer reason. They refuse to admit that Strasbourg, that Alsace, were not the whole of France, and that by failing later they would have failed, nevertheless.

They want to make another attempt.

This time they feel certain they will succeed. Henceforth the nation expects them. When the Emperor's ashes shall have reëntered his capital, the tyrants and traitors will have flown from it. France will be regenerated; Glory and Liberty only will mount guard at the foot of Napoleon's tomb.

Everything is prepared. At least, they think all is in readiness. Their movements have been so secret that the French spy who follows the Prince's every step, is able to write from London, toward the end of July, 1840:

"Louis Napoleon thinks less than ever of reëntering France. He is occupied solely with his pleasures."

The English Cabinet shares this confidence, so natural to established governments.

* * *

At about two o'clock in the morning, on August 6, 1840, Oudinot, a customs-house brigadier, and two of his drummers, saw a yawl filled with some fifteen men in uniform come ashore on the beach of Wimereux. The men leaped out upon the sand and threatening the drummers with their bayonets, compelled them to keep silent. Three times the yawl put back to sea, to a ship which seemed to be lying at anchor a quarter of a league out, and returned to disembark a new contingent. The little troop, in good order and without noise, headed for Boulogne. It reached the barracks of the Forty-Second Infantry at five o'clock. The clarions blew the reveille. Attracted by repeated cries of *Vive Napoléon!* the soldiers hurried down into the barrack-yard half-dressed. Followed by General de Montholon, the Emperor's last friend, Louis Bonaparte, his hands shaking but his voice clear, began to harangue

them. A captain in the Forty-Second, Puygellier, came running up and cried:

"Do not listen to him, friends! Long live the King!" And drawing his sabre, he threatened the Prince.

Louis raised his pistol and fired. A grenadier of the Forty-Second, Geoffrey, had his jaw fractured. His comrades, furious, flung themselves on Louis and his band, and, not without many hard knocks given and received, shoved them out of the barracks.

The insurgents, scattering proclamations and money about them, traversed several streets. They cried *Vive l'Empereur!* But no one echoed their cry. Shutters were closed. People slipped away. Louis, in order to do something, decided to push on to the Column of the *Grande Armée,* about half a mile outside the city. When they arrived and planted a flag, they were attacked by a detachment of National Guards and Gendarmes. The rebels, too weak to resist, ran for the shore. Louis Napoleon who, baring his breast, begged some one to kill him on the spot, was dragged off by Thélin and Persigny to a lifeboat. But the lifeboat capsized. The Prince and his comrades, upon whom the National Guardsmen opened fire, had to swim. Several were killed or wounded. Louis, half-drowned, was brought back to shore. Some fugitives who had dispersed across the fields were apprehended at the same time by the Gendarmes and the peasants who aided them. By nine o'clock in the morning, all the insurgents, in a pitiable condition, had been locked up in a crypt of the old Château of Boulogne.

On the ship, seized out at sea by the authorities, was found a living eagle—it had lost most of its feathers—which Louis had carried with him from London as a

fetish. It was liberated. Three days later, under a strong escort, the Prince was taken away and entered in the gaol-book of the Paris *Conciergerie*.

* * *

Strasbourg had been an audacious enterprise, yet one which might have led to further partial successes. Poorly planned, still more poorly carried out, the affair of Boulogne was a piece of idiocy.

The conception of France entertained by Louis Bonaparte and his familiars was a false one. They saw her as sectarians. The country was not awaiting them. The enthusiasm with which it saluted the Emperor's memory was no more than an effusion of sentiment, without political foundation or consequences. The recent defeat of Bianqui and Barbes had disorganized the Republicans. The secret societies on whose support Louis had so greatly counted had been blighted. The July Monarchy, definitely rid of the nightmare of revolt, was becoming more and more firmly rooted in the land, where the ideal of nationalism, so highly exalted during the first few years after 1830, had grown torpid with material well-being. Aside from a few hot-heads, France was satisfied to live beneath the bourgeoisie's banner of the Golden Calf. Glory was still a subject of conversation, but only the glory of the past. Adventures were not desirable. Security was what the future was asked to guarantee. People were becoming rich.

* * *

The King and M. Thiers, his minister, at first dumbfounded, soon rubbed their hands. In the happening that had just occurred they saw the end of Bonapartism.

The entire press—excepting Louis Blanc's sheet—

heaped insult on the adventurer of Boulogne. The *Journal des Débats* said:

"It goes beyond mere farce. One does not kill madmen, one shuts them up." And Emile de Giradin's *Presse:*

"The son of the ex-king of Holland has no more sense than he has feeling. He is not even a party chief; he is merely a caricature of one."

Abroad there was the same malevolence. Even in England the lamentable fiasco turned public opinion against the pretender. The *Times* opines:

"Louis Napoleon is in a sorry state. The poor devil almost drowned, and he came near being shot. If one of the bullets had hit him it would have been a fitting end for such an imbecile."

Louis-Philippe could have, he should have, let the imbecile go. Then all the laughers would have been on his side. Yet this time he wanted him penalized. Thiers, recalling the Strasbourg verdict, rejected the Assize Court. The King, pedantic and fond of legal etiquette, consulted documentary authorities and decided that Louis Bonaparte should be tried by the Court of Paris.

Only his mother's old friend, Mme. Récamier, came to visit the prisoner in the *Conciergerie.*

* * *

Followed by Montholon, Parquin, Persigny, and Conneau, Louis appeared in the hall of the Luxembourg. He was dressed in black, the cross of the Legion of Honor on his breast. Berryer and Ferdinand Barrot had consented to defend him. Chancellor Pasquier, the servitor of any government in power, questioned him with malicious insolence:

"Who are your accomplices?"

"The whole of France."

"By what right are you wearing that cross of the Legion of Honor?"

"I found it in my cradle."

He haughtily refused to acknowledge the competence of the court.

"I confront you as the representative of a principle, gentlemen, a cause, a defeat! The principle is one you have recognized, the cause one you have served; the defeat one you should wish to avenge. . . . As the representative of a political cause, I cannot allow a political jurisdiction to sit in judgment on my wishes and actions. Your legal forms deceive no one. . . . In the struggle which is beginning, there will be only one victor and one vanquished. If you are the victor's servants I cannot expect justice at your hands and I reject your generosity."

This he said with cold calculation. He was not trying to convince. His words were addressed less to the peers than to the country at large.

Not for a moment did he lose the calmness born of a sovereign self-confidence. He even remarked one day to Ferdinand Barrot:

"When I am master here, I shall see that the Gendarmes have a new uniform; the one they wear is ugly."

Nor did the other accused defend themselves. Montholon—he had disapproved of the expedition, which he considered chimerical—said but a few lofty words:

"I caught the Emperor's dying sigh. I closed his eyes. It is needless for me to explain my conduct."

On Louis Napoleon was inflicted a punishment created especially for his benefit: imprisonment *for life* in some

fortified place. His accomplices: Montholon, Parquin, and Persigny were given twenty years; Henri Conneau, five.

This verdict, harsh in the extreme, and evidently dictated by the government, preserved the Prince from ridicule. In the eyes of France he would no longer be a fool or a madman, but the martyr of a political ideal.

When Berreyer, much moved, came to inform him of the verdict:

"You look downcast, my dear M. Berreyer," said Louis Napoleon; "have you bad news?"

"Your Highness is condemned to perpetual imprisonment!"

Louis smiled:

"What is perpetual here on earth?"

He distributed among his friends the totality of the funds which he had collected in London for his expedition —a hundred and sixty thousand francs. He saw to it that the capital of the pensions he hitherto had paid his mother's old servants, whom he feared he might be unable to aid in the future, was remitted to them.

"I have no further need of anything," he would say.

He found money an embarrassment. Without a sou he entered the fortress of Ham, on the very day the *Belle Poule* frigate, coming to anchor at Saint Helena, saluted the Emperor's tomb with all its guns.

PART TWO

The "University" of Ham

It was a December day. The chimney was smoking. Louis Bonaparte opened the windows and, behind the bars, leaned for a moment with his elbows on the sill. The air was not cold, but its humidity weighted his shoulders. He looked out. A line of bare curtain-wall surrounded the fort, the ancient castle of the Constable de Saint Pol, grounded for the past four centuries in the Picardy marshes. Beyond the veil of mist lay the little village of Ham, grey and silent like a Beguine convent. One could divine the Somme, flowing between its level banks on which, now and again, shivered the gnarled skeletons of weeping willows.

In the courtyard of the fortress soldiers in fatigue jackets came and went, dragging their hob-nailed boots. One of them, whistling, raised his eyes and saw the Prince. He cut short his whistle and, clicking his heels, saluted, his hand to his forage-cap. The gesture, had he been caught, would have gotten him fifteen days in the guard-house. Yet few among the four-hundred men of the garrison would let this danger deter them. Louis inclined his head; his hand sketched an amicable gesture. Then he closed the casement and returning to his seat by the fire, which was now burning brightly, rolled one of his eternal cigarettes.

He wore a decidedly fantastic military costume, a blue tunic with gold buttons, grey pantaloons, and a red *képi*.

His feet were slippered. His moustache and chin-tuft had grown longer. He was paler, leaner than in England. Want of exercise had made him less alert. He had aged.

The room he occupied—it was dignified by the name of cabinet—was small and low-ceilinged. The walls were unpapered, there was not even a straw mat on the worn brick floor. It contained an old mahogany bureau, a chest of drawers, a lounge, a few wicker chairs, a round table covered with green baize, and a screen ornamented with cartoons clipped from *Charivari*. On either side of the fireplace shelves laden with books, and with bound volumes of the *Moniteur* and the *Journal des Débats* rose to the ceiling. On the wooden mantel between the busts of the Emperor and of Josephine, stood a small clock with gilded dial, surmounted by Saturn with his scythe. On the wall hung a few engravings, some family miniatures, notably of Napoleon and Hortense.

There was a scratching at the door. General de Montholon, followed by Henri Conneau, entered. Shortly after sentence had been passed on them, they had been allowed to share the Prince's prison. Worthy Thélin, acquitted by the Chamber of Peers, had obtained permission, a few months later, to reënter his master's service at Ham. But the economical government did not pay him. The three prisoners already cost a good deal as it was: seven francs a day per head.

Authorized by a movement of Louis's hand, Montholon and the Doctor seated themselves on the lounge. The intimacy of life in the fortress had not relaxed their observance of etiquette. Even the commandant of the fortress, the honest Demarle, though at first it went against the grain, addressed Louis as "Your Highness!"

"I have just had news of Persigny," said the Prince. "He is now practically at liberty, in Versailles. The town is his prison. I wrote to congratulate him and told him he was better treated than we were."

He spoke evenly, without a trace of bitterness. Conneau murmured a few courteous words. The General said nothing. Neither of them liked the rude and fanatic Persigny, whom they accused of having pushed Louis into the Boulogne disaster.

"Do you know how he spends his time? He's writing a work on the usefulness of the Egyptian pyramids."

"Nothing that Persigny does could ever surprise me," said Montholon.

His voice was dry and feeble. Though over sixty, he was straight as a ramrod, somewhat too stiff, perhaps, yet impeccable in his carriage, dress, and manners, those of a courtier rather than of a soldier.

Louis pointed to the calendar hanging above the bureau.

"December fifteenth. Three years ago today Paris welcomed the Emperor's ashes."

They were silent, no doubt because they saw in their mind's eye what the eye of the flesh had not beheld—the slow, glorious processional which by way of the Champs-Élysées, amid a terrific tremor of flags, had conducted Napoleon to his dwelling in the Invalides, whence his legend now dominated the earth.

"And I, his nephew, am still here. Yet I do not complain. Given a name like ours, prison or power is our fate. And, then, I have friends. My uncle was crucified alive on a desert rock like Prometheus. I, at least, am a captive on French soil."

"Saint Helena was an epilogue, Ham will be a prologue," said the General.

"I hope so. Yes, sooner or later. . . ."

Often, carried away by his dream, he did not end his sentences. This time, a moment later, he resumed:

"Of all this entanglement of events—exile, Strasbourg, Boulogne, of our misfortunes, our sufferings, what remains? Nothing at all—at least that is how many see it, my dear friends. Yet as I see it there has been a tremendous acquisition. Think of it, in 1823 the Emperor and his son were dead; France no longer knew the champions of the imperial cause. Here and there, it is true, a few Bonapartes might be glimpsed behind the scenes of the world's stage, like inanimate bodies, petrified mummies, or imponderable ghosts—yet so far as the people knew, the thread had been broken. You yourself must admit, General, that you had abandoned hope, that you expected nothing of any one."

"It is true, Your Highness."

"Well, I have reknotted the broken thread. I raised myself from the dead, by my efforts. And to-day, only twenty leagues from Paris, I am a sword of Damocles for the government. Sometimes I compare myself to M. de Chateaubriand's Indians. Like them, I built my canoe of tree-bark myself, I wove its sails, I carved its oars. All I ask of the gods is a favoring breeze to carry me where I wish to go. And some day I know it will blow. When? . . . I'm patient. I can wait."

He reflected for a moment.

"Napoleon was fifty when he went to Saint Helena. I am thirty-five. Europe was opposed to him. Now all

Europe is big with his ideas. All, or nearly all of his enemies have disappeared. . . ."

And he added:

"Apropos, did you know that Sir Hudson Lowe has just died?"

"So I read in the Westminster *Gazette*," said the Doctor.

"Lowe was a terrible jailor," remarked Montholon, "but an even greater jackass. He knew absolutely nothing of the Revolution or of France. He had the soul of some old mercenary. In his eyes the Emperor was merely a rebel officer and the whole Revolution never happened."

"When I was in England," said the Prince, "he had been banished from good society. No one had anything to do with him. And yet I have heard reliable witnesses declare that Lord Bathurst, by his venomous orders, was far more to blame for the indignities inflicted upon the Emperor than was Lowe."

"No matter who gave them, they have sullied England's reputation for fair play," murmured the Doctor.

"Don't say that, Henri. The follies and crimes of a few individuals cannot dishonor a great nation. The Emperor himself felt this. A number of Englishmen paid him touching tributes of regard. And how can I forget the manner in which I was received in London? Do you know, the more I think of it, the more I am inclined to believe that Napoleon's greatest misfortune was his inability to come to an understanding with England. One can establish nothing against her opposition. With her friendship everything is possible. When I come to power,

I shall first of all come to an agreement with the Cabinet of Saint James."

"It seems that the buildings at Longwood are falling to pieces," said Conneau. "Everything is neglected."

"The English government is in the wrong. Yet why does the French government not take up the matter? As soon as I leave here I expect to go to Saint Helena and have the Emperor's house restored at my own expense. But tell me, General, wasn't there a garden, where he worked with his own hands?"

"Yes, it was a fancy of his—to kill time. The days were so long. He had the earth spaded up by Chinese coolies, and he himself raked it and sowed the seed. I can still see him, with his huge straw hat pulled down over his eyes. He looked like a planter. . . . But it was only a passing distraction. He soon tired of everything. And he was already ill."

"I, too, want to cultivate a bit of ground here. There is room enough in the fortress, on the ramparts. Commandant Demarle will surely grant me permission. I'll send to Paris for seed."

Even in trifles, he is preoccupied with the imitation of his model in all things, with the desire to tread in the giant's footsteps. His destiny, so he feels, would only be, *could only be,* a replica of that greater one.

They recur to Saint Helena. Montholon knows a thousand and one details regarding life at Longwood which the *Mémorial,* and the memoirs of Gourgaud and of Autommarchi, for all their prolixity, have not recorded. He describes the audiences the Emperor, with a certain touching formality, accorded transient strangers, officers, sailors, people of little mark; the horseback rides across

the plateaus of black basalt, when Napoleon, his small spy-glass raised to his eyes, would look out to sea for so long, so very long. . . . An uncontrollable propensity invariably leads the General to revert to their domestic life, made so difficult by the lack of room, want of funds, the Governor's vexations, the exasperation of their own tempers.

At times he ventures to let fly an arrow against Las Cases and his son, against Bertrand, narrow-minded and meddlesome, against his wife. . . . Louis stops him with a glance. He refuses to admit anything below par in the abode of Jove.

Thélin enters. He has just returned from town, where he has been attending to the prisoners' errands. He carries in his arms the Prince's pet, a small black and tan dog, named Ham.

He discreetly signals his master. The latter draws out his watch.

"It is already three o'clock. I still have some writing to do. . . ."

Montholon and the Doctor rise, without a smile. They know why they are being discreetly dismissed.

"I'll see you presently," says Louis.

When his friends have left, he opens the door to his room, a genuine study, with a painted wooden bed, a small porcelain stove, a cheap table on which, notwithstanding, glitter toilet articles of gold and ivory, bearing the imperial monogram. A young woman is sewing near the window. She rises when she sees Louis enter and runs to fling her arms about his neck. The dog gayly leaps and barks around them.

Eleanor Vergeot is a pretty girl of twenty-three, tall,

chestnut-haired, with blue eyes, and a fresh, agreeable complexion. She had been engaged as a laundress by the fort gatekeeper, who acted as the prisoners' caterer, and it was while bringing them their meals that she made a conquest of Louis.

It had not been difficult, for he felt the imperious urges his carefree London life had only rendered more acute. The simple working-girl was his from the moment he looked at her. She yielded to that allure of kindness and distinction radiated by Louis's person and attitude. She adored "her Prince," she pitied him with all her soul, she was bent on showing him her tender animal affection at no matter what cost. In her company Louis, aside from enjoyment, found a species of heart's asylum. He loved to be loved.

Brought up by a woman, he had retained a deep taste for the grateful warmth of feminine society. Eleanor, the shoe-maker's daughter, might be ignorant and commonplace—but what of it? Her gay familiarity, her lively humor, her humble courage did more to render Louis's prison supportable to him than even Conneau's ingenious friendship or Thélin's soothing care.

Within the fortress every one, from the Commandant to the last sapper, knew about the intrigue and closed his eyes. In February Eleanor was delivered of a child whose father was "unknown." Louis had it sent to a good nurse, Mme. Bure, who brought it up.

This liaison had developed shortly after Mathilde Bonaparte's marriage to Count Demidoff. The news, brought to Ham by Ferdinand Barrot, was a grievous blow to Louis. In spite of his strained relations with his uncle Jerome, he had not forgotten his former fiancée, the

haughty girl of Amazonian carriage with whom, four years earlier, at Arenenberg, he had exchanged vows and kisses. Louis had nourished but few illusions regarding Jerome's intentions; his uncle would not yield. Nevertheless, in a hidden corner of his deep, romantic soul, there had survived the hope of some day finding Mathilde once more. He thought—with the naïveté of pride—that she would not bring herself to marry another, seeing that she could not be his.

And she had married—married for love, said some; to save her father from entire destitution, said others—a Russian of the petty nobility, but immensely wealthy, who had lost his heart to her in Florence, where he represented the Czar at the court of the Grand Duke of Tuscany.

Louis said to Barrot:

"This is the last, most bitter blow fate had in store for me."

For several days he seemed to be more than ordinarily taciturn. He preferred to be alone. He did not go out. He no longer wrote. He smoked without ceasing, shuffling across the uneven floor in his slippers. Then he found himself once more. Some visits engaged his attention. The daily prison routine was resumed.

He had been an early riser since childhood; he worked until ten, and then ate breakfast, nearly always with Montholon and Conneau. Next, picking up his red, gold-fringed *képi,* he went for a walk on the ramparts, or rode horseback in the fort enclosure. An excellent horseman, he put his mount through all sorts of daring leaps on the grassy sward, to the astonishment of the bourgeois of Ham, who often gathered at the foot of the wall to watch him. An agent of the secret police followed him at a

distance whenever he exercised in this way. He would soon have enough of it; all surveillance, no matter how unobtrusive, annoyed him. He would reënter the fort, return to his study, his newspapers, his pamphlets; at times receive a friend come from Paris; or shut himself up with M. Akar, a pharmacist of Ham, and an excellent chemist, in a corner made over into a laboratory, where he amused himself experimenting. At five o'clock he ate dinner. The evening was consecrated to chess or to a game of whist with Commandant Demarle, the Doctor and Montholon.

On Sundays the *curé* came from Ham to say mass in a long dark apartment on the ground floor. Louis was anything but devout, but he was punctilious in his attendance. Like his mother, without really being much more than a deist, he looked on Catholicism with favor. He was wont to say that religions had played a greater part in history than philosophies.

He received quite a number of visitors. Mme. Gordon, his ardent Strasbourg auxiliary, the Duchess of Hamilton, Hortense Lacroix, the friend of his youth and adopted sister, now the wife of the painter Cornu, Lady Cranford, Lord Malmesbury, Sir Robert Peel, Larrey Vieillard, Louis Blanc, Alexandre Dumas, Chateaubriand, and Berryer were permitted to call on him. The Prince received them all as he would have done in London or Arenenberg. He no longer seemed conscious of his leprous prison walls. He appeared full of confidence in the future. To his cousin, Lady Hamilton, for whom he always had a tender spot in his heart, he said:

"Although Fortune has twice deceived me, my destiny will only the more surely be accomplished."

He continued to devote himself assiduously to his large correspondence, which, incidentally, seemed to be quite uncensored. He wrote to Mme. Cornu (Hortense Lacroix) who, active as a literary critic, constituted herself his purveyor of books and documents. Often, though she was not well to do, and would accept nothing from Louis, she made the trip to Ham in the diligence, to bring him gleanings which she could not entrust to the post-office, or anent which she wished to give him details or advice. She visited the public libraries and took out the manuscripts needed for the *History of Artillery* which Napoleon had begun, the studies and statistics without which he would have been unable properly to complete his *Essay on the Extinction of Pauperism.* The most diligent and tireless of secretaries, she recopied his rough drafts and corrected his proofs. And although, a sincere democrat, she was opposed to the Prince's political ambitions, she served the imperialist pretender out of gratitude toward her benefactress, Queen Hortense—out of friendship, too, perhaps, because from childhood she had cherished for Louis a pure, secret, unavowed affection, whose existence she did not even admit to herself.

He corresponded with M. Vieillard, who had been his tutor in Switzerland, after Philippe Le Bas had left him, and who, a man of influence and a deputy, kept him informed with regard to the trend in the Chambers. He corresponded with Mocquard, the lawyer, his mother's old friend, still devoted to her son's interests; with Ferdinand Barrot, Armand Laity, Louis Blanc, big-hearted Utopian and admirable historian; with Georges Sand, like Louis preoccupied with humanitarian dreams; with Sismondi, Ledru-Rollin, and Bastide. He offered his ideas,

as a rule trying to bridge the abyss which yawned between the Republicans and Bonapartists, originally brothers, since both harked back to the principle of popular sovereignty, and who, though separated by misunderstandings, would some day have to reunite. What was he, Louis Bonaparte himself, if not a Republican desirous of bestowing upon the nation a tradition necessary to ensure order and stability?

He was too intelligent not to realize the gaps in his education. From the time that he entered Ham he decided to make up for them by rereading the classics, first the Latin, then the French. But he soon grew disheartened. The writers of the age of Louis XIV bored him. Among those of the eighteenth century he took pleasure in renewing his acquaintance with Rousseau. He turned to the Romanticists. Byron captivated him for a moment. He consistently admired Chateaubriand, yet not for his best writings. Lamennais still impressed him because of his moving similes, his biblical style. To Vigny, Hugo, de Musset he paid but little attention. With regard to Lamartine, who should have pleased him, his opinion was biased because of a bitter grudge. Had not the poet dared to say, openly, before the Chambers, when Napoleon's ashes had been returned: "I am not without apprehension regarding the deification of a mere man. On his tomb should be engraved these three words: 'For Napoleon Only!' There should rise from these ashes neither a pretender nor an imitator." He turned readily to the novelists: Balzac, Georges Sand, Alexandre Dumas. Yet he preferred *Picciola* to their works. At bottom, he had no literary taste; he had no taste of any kind. There was nothing of the humanist about Louis. He soon

abandoned the stylists and the poets in order to turn to the scientists, the economists, the political or social theoreticians.

Fournier, Saint-Simon, Proud'hon became the assiduous associates of his musings. He always had loved the humble, the poor, the lowly. He suffered because of their wretchedness, terrible in certain quarters of the city. Workmen wore themselves out in unsanitary workshops, for a famine wage, both sexes toiling together, little children yoked to tasks beyond their strength. French industry, as well as that of Europe in general, had been wallowing in a cesspool for several centuries. Louis wished to clear away these vitiated makeshifts in order to introduce more machinery, raise wages, secure for the workman the permanent possession of a salubrious home which would keep him away from the grogshop. He did not favor the Saint-Simonean system, which pushes socialization to the point of absurdity: no more inheritances, no more marriages, state-controlled production, "each according to his capacity, each capacity according to its works." Yet with this ingenious theory, which abolished war together with competition, Louis Bonaparte remained deeply impressed his life long. He would never be a socialist. Yet he would always retain his sense of social solidarity.

These ideas worked within him slowly and continuously. He gave expression to them not only in his letters, but in his magazine articles, his sketches, the essays to which he devoted several hours a day. He wrote a great deal. He was by instinct a journalist or, rather, a prolific publicist. He sensed the power of the press in advance of his time. To spread his doctrine, expose his

projects, broadcast his name, there was no better vehicle than the press, even in that day when all newspapers went in leading-strings. Those of Paris forbidden him, he became a regular contributor to papers of the second class, which increased in importance and in circulation as a result: the *Progrès du Pas-de-Calais*, the *Guetteur de Saint-Quentin*, the *Journal du Loiret*, and a few foreign periodicals. The French government surprisingly accorded him entire liberty in this respect. It thought it could best show its power by ostentating a serene indulgence, not alone toward the captive pretender, but also toward the Bonapartist party, which it affected to think not worth taking into account or, if one prefer, to regard as a historical survival. Provided he stayed in his prison, Louis Bonaparte could discuss the questions of the day in the public press to his heart's content.

"It keeps him occupied," said King Louis-Philippe.

The shrewd King forgot that it also kept public opinion occupied, and that, termite-like, Louis was tunneling his way into the heart of France.

Louis wrote rapidly. He wrote too much. His slack phrases often spun out a thought already attenuate in itself. Yet now and again, like an echo of the Great Man's *bulletins*, which he unceasingly thumbed, the Cæsarian accent was recognizable.

Articles do not satisfy him, however. Influenced by his studies he writes veritable tomes on the most diverse subjects: "Historic Fragments," studies on "The Past and the Future of Ordnance," memoirs on "The Electric Currents," on "Beet-Root Sugar," on "A Project for a Nicaraguan Canal." When he has wearied of writing, he enters his little laboratory where, with M. Akar and

Dr. Conneau, he devotes himself to searching for a new explosive. In the evening, at the whist-table, he shows his blackened, acid-stained hands.

"You will blow us all up, Your Highness," says the Commandant, laughing.

If Louis Bonaparte suffered because of his seclusion he never complained. Yet, at least during his first years, did he suffer? This benign prison, where he lived amid such faithful friends, cut him off, less from the world than from its tumult. He always had been a lover of solitude, of those long hours when the soul, retired within itself, weighs its powers; when revery retints the past, and imagination evokes future deeds. Solitude offered him a chance to gain a greater meed of self-control, to identify himself more closely with the part he already had assumed in history's eyes. Solitude was his counselor, his guide, his witness, his surety.

He examined his conscience, in order to banish from it all confusion, any too human fancies. He would not have accomplished it, perhaps, had not a most primitive argument served his spirit as a magnetic pole: Only a Bonaparte could give the French glory and happiness. He was the Emperor's heir. Hence France awaited him. Though it might take years before he could fulfill his mission, what of it? The man appointed by Providence is not dependent upon time.

* * *

1844 . . .

1845 . . .

The years pass, slowly, the more slowly the longer their toll. 1846. Louis now has been a prisoner for six years. Little by little, weariness overcomes him. Eleanor

is still with him (and there is a second son, as well). Conneau, though his sentence had expired in 1844, has secured permission to continue at Ham. Louis still reads and writes ceaselessly. Yet his internal springs of action seem rusted. And, besides, his health has been affected. The moisture seeping through the walls has called forth a stiffening of the joints. He had grown emaciate, his complexion jaundiced. His eyes, more deeply sunken, are almost always half-closed.

His visitors come less frequently. Are people beginning to forget him?

Louis yearns increasingly for liberty.

At the beginning of his captivity, when Montholon or Conneau spoke of escape, which they thought feasible, he would declare: "I will not leave Ham save for the cemetery of the Tuileries." He no longer says so. The idea of liberty, which has crept into his heart, little by little has become a torturing obsession. Is he to let pass the moment for action—that hour decisive above all—which, suddenly recalling him to the attention of France, may facilitate his access to power? He feels that the hour draws near. The July Monarchy, little by little, is sinking into contempt. Its institutions are in a state of decay. There are financial scandals. There is speculation on the part of ministers. There is a foreign policy so spineless that when the ambassador of France speaks, the sovereigns think of other things and turn away their heads.

"France is bored!" cried Lamartine. More than that. France is sick at heart. She had been great; she is now disheartened. Her soil had resounded to the clangor of arms and the tramp of hoofs; now her ears hear only

business discussions. She had shone with the most dazzling irradiations of glory; and now she is no more than a land abased. She is weary of her daily bread, disgusted with common sense and repose. The time is at hand when some imprudence, some error, the resignation of a government too fatigued to defend itself, which offered its throat to the butcher's knife, would cause the junior monarchy to share the fate of its senior branch.

And when the Parisians raised barricades to regain their rights, Louis-Philippe would look about him in dismay, and see only two baby hands to receive his scepter as Revolution, magnificent and terrible, broke for all time those centuried ties which, already cut in the past, had been poorly stitched together again.

Revolution was the state-coach of the Bonapartes. After a cycle of fifty years history began once more. Again there would be the excesses, the disorders, the incertitudes of a new Directory. Who would be capable of a new *Brumaire* if not the nephew of Egypt's conqueror?

His freedom, formerly disdained, at present necessary, Louis Bonaparte could obtain—as he was well aware—if he *asked* for it; and if, as well, he pledged his honor to undertake nothing more against the existing government. But to plead for pardon, no. It was unworthy of him. To pledge himself to inaction was to deny his race, his mission. It was an abdication. Flight remained. Was it possible for him to escape?

For all his captivity seemed the reverse of strict, he was subjected to a very exact control. Two police agents, in civil dress, on duty within the precints of the fortress, watched his movements from the moment he left his

room. It would be hard to pull the wool over their eyes. Commandant Demarle had received strict orders to fire on the Prince if he made an attempt to escape. This officer was one of the bravest of men, but, faithful to his duty, he could not be bribed.

Would the soldiers fire on him? Louis was a favorite with all with whom he came in contact. His simplicity, his amiability, his politeness exerted a charm. Had it been left to them, the soldiers would have opened the fortress gates for him. They covered the wall with charcoal inscriptions: *Vive Prince Louis! Vive l'Empereur!* As a measure of prudence the garrison was relieved every two weeks. Louis joked about it:

"What a nuisance I am for the War Department. In time the whole army will have done garrison duty here."

Nevertheless, controlled by royalist officers, subjected to strict discipline, could he rely upon the rank and file? And besides, even though the soldiers might refuse to use their guns or pursue him, M. Guizot's two police spies, and the jailors of the fortress would suffice to knock over the fugitive with a well-placed bullet.

The Prince, should he attempt to escape, would be risking his life. He was aware of it, yet it did not deter him. His friends, however, seeing that he had practically made up his mind, were uneasy. They now begged him to put off the attempt for a while.

He deferred it for a month.

* * *

One morning the Prince had word from Florence that his father, Louis Bonaparte, was dying.

What did the old King of Holland mean to Louis? Was he really his father? Europe was still chuckling over

Hortense's peccadillos. But Louis had loved his mother too tenderly to feel much affection for the man who had made life a torture for her with his harshness and his rages. So far as he himself was concerned the King had at times caressed him, at others rejected him as a bastard. Nevertheless, father or no father, the political equation imposed an attitude of filial reverence with regard to this dying old man. It was from him that he derived his name and his rights. It was through him that he was a Bonaparte. It was his duty to attempt the impossible in order to be present at his last hour.

He wrote to Count Duchatel, Minister of the Interior: ". . . I hereby affirm that if the French government will allow me to go to Florence to fulfil a sacred duty, I pledge my honor to return and surrender myself as a prisoner whenever it may call on me to do so."

And in a personal letter to Louis-Philippe, he appealed to the King's sense of humanity.

But the King and his government had something better than this promise of Regulus in mind; they insisted upon a formal renunciation on the pretender's part of all political aspirations.

"That is out of the question," was Louis's answer to Odilon Barrot, who had these negotiations in hand. "I have kept my honor intact. Filial piety will not make me deviate from it a hair's breadth. However, I shall leave it all to fate."

And from that moment on he prepared to escape.

He feared that General Montholon, a giddy-pated old man, might imprudently drop a hint. He dreaded Eleanor's tears. So he only confided his project to Dr. Conneau and Charles Thélin. Both still tried to dissuade

him. But Louis, without a word, gently shook his head at each objection. His resolution taken, nothing could induce him to alter it. They were obliged to yield.

Thélin, who went to town every day, discreetly purchased the necessary clothes and accessories. Louis charged him to get himself a pistol. Conneau objected to this:

"It is not for my defense, Henri," Louis said. "I shall always reproach myself for the instinctive movement which, at Boulogne, made me wound that poor devil, and I give you my word I'll not do so again. But if I am captured, I do not care to survive. My mother is dead. Who is there to suffer in the event of my disappearance? In any event, I'll not be laughed at."

The Doctor showed that he was deeply grieved. The Prince embraced him.

"Forgive me, my friend," he murmured. "You are fond of me, and I am an ingrate. Yet how can I go on living amid jeers and hootings. Yes, this time I'll play double or quits. Fate shall decide."

The enterprise, considered off-hand, seemed sheer folly. The prisoner's lodgings were near the donjon, at the rear of the court. In order to leave the fortress, he would have to descend his stairs, pass the two police officers, Dupin and Issaly, traverse the court, and, before he could pass through the gate and cross the moat, would have to brave not only various functionaries but a post of thirty men, commanded by a sergeant, who mounted guard at the gate day and night.

There was just one favorable circumstance, and that due to chance. At the time, though not at Louis's request, some repairs were being made in the Prince's room

and on the stairway. Three masons were coming and going in the fortress. But they were nearly through with their work.

On May 25, Louis Bonaparte rises at dawn, puts on a coarse linen shirt, pantaloons, and a blue blouse, and steps into a pair of wooden shoes. He shaves off his moustache, colors his cheeks and nose with rouge, and sticks a dirty cap on the black wig which Thélin has obtained in Saint-Quentin. Then, a pipe between his jaws, a board torn from one of the scaffolds across his shoulder, he goes down the stairs. At the turn he meets a workman. Controlling an instinctive movement of recoil, he passes him. At the foot of the stairs he finds himself face to face with one of the spies, who is watching him. Louis jostles him lightly with his plank; and the man growls, his attention distracted. Slowly, dragging his feet, the Prince traverses the courtyard. He reaches the post. The non-com. on guard, sitting on a bench outside, is reading a letter. As luck would have it Louis lets fall his pipe, which breaks. He stoops to pick up the pieces. The sergeant raises his head for a moment, then returns to his letter. On the inner side of the gate the sentry stares at the perturbed mason. He smiles. He is an Alsatian, named Stebach, to whom the Prince had been talking a few days before, and whom he had given some cigarettes. Louis passes. The second sentry, on the drawbridge, looks the other way. Louis—forcing his knees to cease trembling—passes him. At a distance of some thirty-three feet from the moat, two workmen hail him, laughing. He does not answer. "That damned Bertrand!" they say, thinking

him one of their comrades, taciturn by nature. He keeps on going without accelerating his steps.

At first he follows the rampart then, by way of the Saint-Sulpice suburb, wellnigh deserted, he gains the highway. Before the Ham cemetery, where he is to wait for Thélin—who had left a short time after him, leading his little dog on leash—he kneels and murmurs a *Pater noster.*

He waits, sitting on the slope above the road, his plank flung behind him into a field. A carriage appears; it is Thélin, at last, in a cabriolet he has hired in Ham, and which is to take them to Saint-Quentin. Louis gets up beside him, caresses the spaniel. His brow is beaded with sweat.

Before they reach Saint-Quentin he rids himself of his blouse, and puts on the plain suit his valet has brought him. Then he leaves the cabriolet, and goes off afoot toward the Valenciennes' road, while Thélin pushes on to pick up another conveyance and a fresh horse in the town.

By three o'clock they have reached Valenciennes, whence the railroad runs to Belgium, without hindrance. There is no train until five o'clock. They wait patiently in the little railroad depot. An employee recognizes Thélin. He is a former gendarme, who comes up and chats familiarly. He asks how the captive Prince is getting along, talks, jokes, and finally goes his way. The train comes in; they get aboard. They reach Brussels the same evening. Louis is saved.

* * *

At Ham, thanks to Conneau, his flight was not discovered for a long time. The Doctor had placed a dummy

with a silk handkerchief wound around its head in the Prince's bed. When Commandant Demarle, as was his daily custom, made his morning visit, he told him that the Prince had been feeling unwell, had taken medicine and was asleep. The officer did not insist further. He reappeared in the course of the day, but the Doctor got rid of him by various devices. Finally, at seven o'clock in the evening, he returned:

"I have come to see the Prince," he said. "If he is still sleeping I will wait until he awakes." Conneau realized that he no longer would be put off. Besides, it was already so late. . . . The Commandant entered the darkened room and sat down near the bed. From the court rose the roll of drums announcing guard relief. The figure on the bed did not budge.

The officer leaned over:

"Doctor, I cannot hear him breathe."

He lifted the quilt, saw the dummy, and falling back in his seat, cried:

"I am dishonored! The Prince has escaped!"

"Bah," said Conneau, "you have done your duty in every way. I will testify to that effect, and so will the Prince, if any reproach is made you."

"Reproach! My career is ruined!"

"The Prince will indemnify you when he becomes Emperor," said Conneau, calmly.

Brave Demarle, crimson with rage, got up. He took little stock in such optimism.

* * *

1848

February twenty-second, twenty-third, twenty-fourth, Louis-Philippe is overthrown by a blow of the Parisian claw. The July Monarchy had not become rooted. It could only endure in a business routine of petty men, petty troubles, petty successes. Come day, go day, Guizot, in his austere frockcoat, a mediocre soul, coldly passionate, had guided the Orléans' ship of state. On the poop the King, an old man, still able, but with a mind devoid of all but futilities and chicanery, sat with the pendulent cheeks of an overpurged Louis XIV. He spent his time establishing his sons and counting his pistoles, and no longer enjoying the company of his Maintenon, the strong and arid Adelaïde, his sister, he looked on while a ministry which he imagined he had kneaded into shape drifted with the tide.

An electoral reform refused, a banquet forbidden, a burgeoning revolt, a provocative agent's shot, dead men, streets robbed of their paving-stones, barricades, a King who hesitates, hangs his head, and, at last, takes flight in a hansom cab, having lost all save his millions.

The Republic is proclaimed on the twenty-fifth. Louis Bonaparte, apprised of the fact by Persigny the same evening, leaves London and comes to Paris, stopping at the house of a friend. Indignant, the Provisional Government orders him back to England. This pretender! What

a bit of cheek! Every one is in favor of the Republic. The military leaders call themselves Republicans. The Legitimists and Orléanists have become Republicans. Even M. Thiers is a Republican.

It is up to the Bonapartists to get into the same overalls. In the April elections, not only do Louis's cousins, Napoleon, Jerome's son, and Pierre, Lucien's son, but Persigny himself, a candidate in the Loire, entitle themselves Republicans, and, while they are about it, socialists.

Louis champs at the bit. Two months later, on June 4, his friends Armand Laity and Persigny have put him up as a candidate in individual election districts. He is elected in four departments. Will the National Assembly validate his election? Moved by their liberalism, two men of the Left, Jules Favre and Louis Blanc, defend him against the imputation of aspiring to a dictatorship:

Jules Favre says: "Were Citizen Bonaparte to attempt a wretched parody with the imperial mantle which does not fit him, he would be outlawed that very moment, and hauled over the coals."

And Louis Blanc, in even more emphatic accents:

"The Republic is like the sun. Let the Emperor's nephew draw too close and I am sure he will vanish beneath her ray."

Louis Bonaparte's election is confirmed.

Yet his adversaries, Cavaignac especially, do not lay down their arms. They watch him sharply, ready to attack at the first equivocal movement he makes. Louis does not feel strong enough to dare the battle. "We'll give them plenty of rope," he thinks, "Cavaignac will yet hang himself." He stays in London and sends in his resignation.

He is clear-sighted. Cavaignac does hang himself. He harshly suppresses the serious revolt in June. And while the Assembly cheers him, his popularity is choken in blood. The Republicans split. The Bonapartists, under cover, carry on a smooth, convincing propaganda. In September new partial elections are held. Louis is elected by five departments.

This time, acknowledged without question, he takes his seat.

He appears in the Assembly, very discreet, very modest, clad in black, wearing no decorations, looking weary and intelligent. In a low voice he addresses the tribunal, and reads a few lines in which he congratulates himself upon his return to his fatherland after thirty-three years of proscription, and protests his devotion to the Republic.

He sits down again. It is a mediocre début. "There's not much to him," men murmur. And Thiers, skipping about in the corridors, very cocky, repeats to all who will listen:

"He is an idiot whom one can lead by the nose."

On another occasion, when the question is raised of forbidding any member of a former dynasty to become a presidential candidate, Louis Napoleon speaks from his seat to reject the name of pretender with which men still try to saddle him. He entangles himself, stammers and, finally, finds himself unable to continue.

"It sounds reassuring, at any rate!" cries some one.

Reassuring? The uncle, too, had cut an awkward figure in the presence of Assemblies.

* * *

Indeed, in this hour when France seeks a leader, she will scrutinize men other than this washed-out Cæsarion.

There is Lamartine. A modern Girondin, melodious, magnificent, with, perhaps, too exalted a soul, a poet in the tribunal and on the barricade, in turn saving the tricolor banner and boasting of having conspired with the thunders. It was he who had made the National Assembly vote that the President of the Republic be elected by universal suffrage. It was a right, so he said, that reverted to the people. And he thought that the people could hardly do less than elect *him*. His long, noble head, with its tempestuous top-knot swaying to and fro, one white hand on his coat-front beneath which beat his fanciful heart, he prepares for the event. The Orpheus of France, he is ready to become her Cincinnatus.

"One must leave something to Providence," he declares.

Yes, indeed—but supposing the dice have been loaded?

There is Cavaignac. This gaunt, bearded general, with his huge nose, his bushy eyebrows, dark and sinister, is a noble citizen. A soldier, he has retained the civic sense. He has turned himself into an ardent servant of the Republic. But he wants to fashion her, soberly, after his own image. He is too rigid, too firm, too sure of himself; he does not indulge in sonorous phrases. Those near him esteem him, but he could never be a nation's darling.

There is Thiers, *Monsieur Thiers!* Intelligent, with the intelligence of the Midi, of the South, he scintillates, bedazzling himself, thinking himself a universal genius, yet lacking real depth. Honest, perhaps, without really seeming to be so, he reassures and captivates the Assembly with the impetuous mediocrity of an orator and a historian. His hands in the pockets of his blue dress-

jacket, crinkling his small eyes behind his spectacles, he looks like a schoolmaster eager to shine, tirelessly projecting the shrill flood of his eloquence, lecturing on every subject, everywhere, at all times, with a verve not far removed from genius. He flatters every party in turn. He admires Napoleon; he declares himself the friend of the Revolution; he would not need to be urged to become the president of a moderate republic, a sort of citizen Bonaparte. At bottom his party is the party of M. Thiers; and he will never belong to any other. France, for him, is M. Thiers's country.

Unfortunately, his country does not share his own opinion of himself. He is known, in particular, as a former minister of Louis-Philippe, as a shrewd politician, a prolific journalist. His small stature, his vanity, his foibles, his family, supply food for jests. Only M. Thiers could have imagined that he had any chance of being elected president. And he himself is sharp enough not to believe it implicitly.

There is Louis Blanc, a serious figure, a noble character, a profound thinker, and powerful publicist. His social ideas cause alarm.

There is Marshal Bugeaud, who has so ably conducted the affairs of France—and his own—in Algeria. Quite devoid of tact, however, and passing from arrogance to humility, his prestige no longer imposes on any but himself.

There is General Changarnier, commandant of the Paris National Guard; a bustling, ambitious, exigent individual, who is side-stepped as soon as his acquaintance is made. A new Monck, were he to come into power, his first step would be to restore the Count de Chambord.

As a matter of fact, the game for the presidency will be played by Cavaignac and Louis, who now answers only to the name of Louis Napoleon. It was a game Cavaignac must have won, had his competitor been obliged to depend entirely upon himself. But behind him loomed the shadow of the Emperor.

* * *

Louis lived in the Place Vendôme, in the Hôtel du Rhin. He had first thought of establishing himself in the Hôtel de Hollande, where he had stopped with his mother, in 1831. But his courage failed him. Though so many years had passed, the wound his heart had suffered when Hortense died was not yet healed. And the Place Vendôme forced itself upon him. There his blazon called to him, on that bronze shaft crowned with the statue of the modern Cæsar.

"I spend the day looking at it," he tells Mlle. George, the old actress, and an intermittent favorite of Napoleon, who has come to see him.

And, in a manner, he feels as though the colossus has become his guarantor and, so to say, his adviser. He realizes more definitely that he is its heir.

His friends surround him. All the older ones: Persigny, Laity, Vaudrey, Conneau, Hortense Cornu and her husband; Vieillard, Montholon, Mocquard, Conti, Clary, even Mme. Gordon, and among those more recent Edgar Ney, son of the great soldier of the Moskowa, Commandant Fleury, a major of Spahis, in Paris, on leave of absence who, introduced by Persigny, has constituted himself the Prince's aid-de-camp; Doctor Véron, the Count de Nieuwekerke, de Goyon, Émile de Girardin, Vieyra . . .

Louis does not lack the means needed to maintain his

establishment, to live in proper style, continue his propaganda, pension partisans who, on occasion, are greedy. In spite of heavy outlays incurred during his last stay in London, he still possesses some remnants of what his mother and King Louis have left him. Before leaving England he had mortgaged his Italian estates for the sum of 23,000 livres. And, finally, his friend Miss Howard had loaned him over a million.

She had been his acknowledged mistress for the past eighteen months.

Of low extraction, and after an obscure and troubled novitiate, Henriette Howard had become the queen of London, entertaining all the lions of the peerage at her admirably appointed dinners. Alfred d'Orsay had presented her to the Prince, who had just escaped from Ham. The romantic girl developed an interest in him, and almost immediately broke every other tie in order to dedicate herself altogether to Louis.

Henriette Howard is a magnificent woman, with classic lines, a straight, slender body, the loveliest complexion in the world, and the carriage of a Diana. Louis is ardently in love with her. His senses clamor loudly and often. And in her he finds not merely a mistress, but a confidante to whom he reveals most of his plans. Not all of them, for he never has disclosed his whole thought to any human being, save to his mother. Henriette Howard is very intelligent, very ambitious for him and, no doubt, for herself. She is absolutely convinced that Louis Bonaparte will gain a throne.

When the February revolution breaks out, she turns everything she has into cash, sells her horses and furniture, rents her house, and follows Louis to Paris, where

she insists that—unconditionally, without a receipt, without a single promise made—he accept all the funds she has been able to realize. She discreetly installs herself in the Hôtel Maurice. The Prince goes to see her there every evening. Their love affair is generally known and Paris cracks jokes about it. And this English idyl completes the transformation of the former conspirator of Strasbourg and of Boulogne into a man from whom there is little to fear—a weak, irresolute creature, one who thinks less of disturbing the peace than of enjoying himself and who, were he to attain the presidency, would be a King Log in a splendid setting, weighed down by a name too great for him. His reverses have taught him wisdom, think his partisans. He is growing older. He is in his forties.

The presidential election had been fixed for December 10. The campaign was a bitter one, especially in the provinces. General Cavaignac put in motion all the forces of the government, since the Assembly had provisionally conferred the executive power on him. Bales of laudatory biographies were sent to the army barracks, to the institutions, to the mayors, and the priests. Louis Napoleon's partisans sought, above all, to win over the Republicans and Socialists. They promised the peasants and workmen comfort, progress, and a reduction of taxes. They dwelt less on glory than on freedom.

The Conservative committee of the rue de Poitiers, which comprised the Legitimists with Berryer, the Orléanists with Thiers, and the Catholics with Montalembert, hesitated between the two candidates. Cavaignac did not appeal to them. He was not manageable. He would

never agree to the conditions they wished to impose on him. Louis Napoleon promised to do what was asked of him.

He came out in favor of an energetic maintenance of order in face of "the Red spectre" which terrified the *bourgeoisie*. He pronounced himself in favor of religious liberty. He touched Berryer. He flattered Thiers by consulting him with regard to his election manifest. Thiers edited it, in part. The busy little man, realizing that this time he himself could not aspire to the presidency, took pleasure in imagining that at least he "would make" the president. Carried away by the spirit of his rôle, he even showed a tendency to overplay it. In his address to the people the Prince had said:

"If I am chosen President I shall devote myself, wholly and without reserve, to the consolidation of a Republic wise in its laws, honest in its intentions, great and powerful in its deeds. It would be a point of honor with me, at the end of four years, to hand this power over to my successor unimpaired. . . ."

"What's that you say?" Thiers had cried. "You must make as few pledges as possible where the public is concerned."

"You may be right. I'll think it over," Louis replied, absolutely determined not to change a word.

Notwithstanding, Thiers familiarly asked the Prince:

"If you should be elected, what costume will you adopt? That of the First Consul, or something similar would seem to be very suitable, it seems to me."

"I do not know as yet," said Louis. "I shall probably choose either the uniform of a general of the National Guard or that of a general in the regular army."

Thiers frowned:

"But in that case what are we to do, what am *I* and what is any one else to do who is called upon to succeed you? Take my advice, Prince, and wear the costume of the First Consul. It is one we all can wear."

"After all . . ." Louis answered.

He smiled as he twirled his moustache, which he now wore long. His eyes, half-closed, followed the thread of smoke which rose from his cigar.

"I'll make him do whatever I want," thought Thiers.

Not for a moment did Louis doubt that he would be elected. In every last, least French village, from Flanders to Gascony, in every cottage, above the hearth, beside the image of the Virgin, was there not another: "Napoleon's Adieux to the Old Guard," or "The Emperor on his Deathbed"? The statesmen were busy electioneering. Thiers, nervous and absent-minded during the closing days of the campaign, waved his arms:

"Will we even have a majority?"

The Prince's impassibility remained unshaken. The President was to reside in the Élysée. Louis, who had lived in that palace when a child, ordered Commandant Fleury to consult the director of the crown furniture with regard to putting the premises in order. He engaged a staff of servants, secured equipages, formed a household —in advance. Fleury was alarmed: "We're counting our chickens . . ." he thought. But he did not dare to say a word. The Prince seemed so sure of himself.

Cavaignac, for his part, showed the same confidence.

* * *

The count gave the following results:

Votes cast: 7,317,344

Louis Napoleon Bonaparte	5,434,226
General Cavaignac	1,448,107
Ledru-Rollin	376,834
Lamartine	17,910

* * *

It was ten days later.

The National Assembly was in session, Armand Marrast presiding. M. Waldeck-Rousseau, appointed to report the result of the presidential election, appeared on the rostrum. Hardly any one paid any attention to him. Then Cavaignac arose:

"Citizens, representatives," he said in his harsh voice, which even emotion could not soften, "I remit to you the powers with which you entrusted me."

The Assembly applauded. Armand Marrast, in the name of the French people, proclaimed Louis Napoleon Bonaparte President of the Republic.

Louis entered the hall and slowly mounted the tribunal. He wore a frock coat, with the cordon of the Legion of Honor, and white gloves.

To all or nearly all of those present he appeared to have changed. Serious, with a ringing voice and assured bearing, he swore to observe the Constitution.

The Right Wing watched him—thunderstruck.

"Is it possible that the case of Sixtus the Fifth is repeating itself?" murmured Thiers. "Now that he is Pope is he casting away his crutches?"

Descending from the tribunal, Louis Napoleon approaches Cavaignac, seated in the midst of the deputies of the Left, and offers him his ungloved hand. The General does not take it.

Three Years

The erstwhile prisoner of Ham is the ruler of France. It has been a swift and brilliant rise, a conquest of power by the most legitimate means, with the practically unanimous consent of the whole country. Louis Napoleon had not been mistaken; a providential star rode the skies of his life.

Would he, taking advantage of his dominating position, attempt a *coup d'État* in order to declare himself Emperor?

From his youth on, even in exile, in prison, he always has aspired to reëstablish the Empire. Yet his return to France, his contact with political actualities, perhaps the maturity due to age and, above all, the admirable confidence the nation had shown him, for the moment led him to content himself with the first place without the addition of the crown. For the present the only plan he has in mind is to employ the considerable powers he enjoys under the Constitution in calming the country, harried by so many storms, to revive its order and prosperity, and, after years of neglect, restore it to its due position of European eminence. A Napoleonic Republic, more flexible, more capable of moving with the times, as well as more consistent with new democratic ideas, might be preferable to an Empire. Napoleon himself had never seemed greater or more fortunate than when First Consul. Louis, though proud, is not vain; his tastes do not lead

him to desire a court. And, besides, he has sworn fealty to the Constitution. A vulgar adventurer would have laughed to scorn an impediment of the sort. But Louis has his scruples. He is concerned about his word of honor. He will keep his promises, no doubt confining himself to a demand for a prolongation of the presidency when his term is about to expire. After he has been in power two years, at Lyon, on August 15, 1850, he will say:

"Parties that have no national support may dream of usurpation, but the man chosen by six millions of voters will carry out the wishes of the people; he will not betray them."

In the reconciliation of political factors loyalty is a normal, not to say an elementary, condition of a balance of power. But difficulties are bound to arise and become more serious. For though the nation may be for Louis Napoleon, the National Assembly is not.

It is no longer the Assembly of 1848. The last elections had seated in the Palais-Bourbon a strong majority of Legitimists and Orléanists, a few dozen moderate Republicans and on the Left, nearly two hundred *Socialists*. The Prince's government, in order not to sink into an appalling alliance with the *Reds,* ran the risk of becoming the hostage of the Monarchists.

The identical origin of their powers arrayed the Assembly against the chief executive. Both springing from the popular vote, the very essence of the fact made them rivals. And if outstanding men—in a greater measure than they imagined—had helped elect him, still Thiers, Berryer, and Odilon Barrot meant to keep in leading-strings a president with so awkward a name, one so un-

acquainted with affairs and who, according to them, could only apply the experience of a conspirator to political problems. Cavaignac and his friends, still bruised by their fall, were looking forward to his blunders. And in a land revolving uncertainly on its axis, in the eyes of a storm-clouded Europe, it was going to be difficult for Louis Napoleon to avoid blundering.

The French eruption of 1848, even more than that of 1830, had flung up a tremendous tidal wave which, to the farthest reaches of the Continent, had undermined the olden thrones and brought to the fore the nations which the Holy Alliance had been able to enchain, but powerless to destroy.

Revolution rages in Austria, in Bohemia, in Hungary, in the Danubian principalities; there is agitation in Germany. Italy rises in arms, from the Alps to Sicily, Rome proclaims the Republic and drives out the Pope, who flees to Gæta. Louis Napoleon, faithful to the promise he has given the French Catholics, sends troops to Rome, to reëstablish order. In vain the Republicans protest, stirring up a revolt in Paris. The President does not give way: "Our military honor is engaged," he says.

The Paris uprising is suppressed. And Oudinot takes Rome. Yet Louis Napoleon's liberal advice is ill received by the Pontiff, and as a reward for having reestablished the latter on his throne, he finds himself out of favor with the Catholics.

The reactionary majority in the Assembly thinks the moment to down the Socialists is at hand. On May 31, despite the Prince's opposition, it passes a law which, "purifying" the universal franchise, strikes some three

millions of citizens, most of them workmen, from the list of voters.

Thenceforth the hostility of the two parties increases and becomes more and more envenomed. The Assembly distrusts the President. It compels the appointment as commander of the army of Paris of General Changarnier, who gives free rein to insolent remarks against the President, and even dares talk of taking him to Vincennes. Louis Napoleon deprives him of his command. The Assembly overturns his ministry. It is war, open and relentless.

The President's allowance is too small. His style of living is modest rather than otherwise, but money slips through his fingers, as in the past it had slipped through those of his grandmother Josephine. He cannot behold misery without emptying his purse. As a child he would give his shoes to a barefoot boy. And he is helpless when it comes to defending himself against the greed of others. Bure, his foster-brother, tries to introduce some order into his affairs. But Conneau is the most disinterested man in the world, and Persigny is prodigal. Greatly embarrassed, the President asks for a supplementary advance. The Assembly refuses it him.

"Well and good," says Louis Napoleon to Mocquard, whom he has made the head of his cabinet, "I can live in one room, but they are mistaken if they think that they can starve me into yielding a single one of my rights."

He keenly resents the insult. These small-souled parliamentarians wish to drive him to desperation, reduce the representative of France to shifts and contrivances. They shall see.

He sells his horses and carriages, he suppresses the balls and *soirées* at the Élysée, with the exception of the formal Monday receptions. He ought to cut down his service staff as well, but cannot bring himself to do so. It is not in his nature to turn people out on the street. But he is beginning to owe more and more. He is obliged to borrow a million from General Narvaez, the Ambassador of Spain.

In a year's time, if the Constitution is not amended to permit of his reëlection, his presidency will come to an end. Now the Prince has no intention of giving up his power. His inborn taste for power has increased as a consequence of its exercise. He is merely in the experimental stages of that task of French regeneration, of European reconstruction, which he has assumed. Only permanence will allow him to realize his dreams, to fulfil his mission. But the Assembly refuses to grant it to him. In that body Louis Napoleon now has hardly anything but enemies, tacit or avowed. The Left accuses him of wishing to be a dictator, the Right dreams only of getting him out of the way in order to make the Monarchy's bed by means of an agreement between the two branches of the Bourbon family.

Without the least hope of success, he nevertheless tries to secure a revision of the Constitution by legal means.

The Assembly will not grant his wish.

In a few months, therefore, he will have to resign, will have to step back into obscurity, and, his heart filled with rage, witness the crumbling of authority, the disorder of parties, the eclipse of that homeland of Napoleon

which only required a firm hand in order once more to lead the world.

Or else . . .

Or else, perjuring himself, he must carry out that *Coup d'État* which his enemies dread and his friends demand, and upon which, after so much consideration and reconsideration, he had not as yet been able to decide.

This vow made in the presence of the whole land, can he, a gentleman by instinct and by education, disown it with the consequent resounding scandal entailed? More than ever, he feels that France is truly with him. Among all classes, many lofty souls are only too eager to serve. They have caught a glimpse of glory. Like old battle-chargers, when the trumpet sounds they will align themselves behind this chief, so deserving of honor and so calumniated, who will deliver them from the lawyers' rule. Frenchmen of that day were imbued with a profound love for their country. To the majority of them the principate of Louis Napoleon meant a French renaissance.

The weeks were passing. A decision would have to be reached. But still the Prince-President hesitated.

He controlled public opinion in the small towns and throughout the countryside, in the army, and among all the hosts of administrative servants whose center and motive force he was. Yet if the Monarchists, fated, sooner or later, to pledge adhesion, owing to self-interest or weakness, did not worry him, the Republicans, especially those of Paris, were capable of a heroic resistance which might cause torrents of blood to be shed. And Louis Napoleon had a horror of blood. At the thought

of these men, with their fixed ideas, their serious souls, worthy of ancient Rome and the Revolution, who at the first signal would rush to the barricades, musket in hand, ready to die in order to prevent his dictatorship, he drew back.

Nearly every evening he left the Élysée by the garden, and went to Miss Howard, in the rue du Cirque, with whom, though he often deceived her, he still maintained the closest relations. In her home, in its rose and yellow *salon,* smothered with curtains, rugs, and hangings, where no sound even penetrated, he savored the charms of that intimacy to which he was so sensitively alive. He would stay there for several hours, plunged in an easy chair, his mistress's little dog on his lap, a cigarette between his lips. His nearest familiars, Conneau, Persigny, Fleury, Edgar Ney, Bacciochi, Vaudrey, de Morny talked among themselves, joking and arguing. He did not seem to hear what they said, and himself hardly ever spoke a word. Toward eleven o'clock he would rise, and his friends would leave after shaking hands with him.

Once alone with his beautiful mistress he would gladly have changed the subject of conversation. Miss Howard, however, would at times try to bring him back to the "great affair." She hoped she might exert an influence on the Prince's life, be the Pompadour—or even more—of a brilliant reign. She deserved to play a leading part, so she thought, as a reward for her devotion, her friendship, her sacrifices. By every means in her power she endeavored to drive Louis Napoleon to take immediate action. He listened to her patiently, smiling on occasion, when in her words he recognized the suggestions and arguments of Persigny or de Morny. At times she lost

her temper. When she concluded he would twist his moustache, and, almost closing his eyes, would remark:

"There's truth in what you say. I'll have to look into it."

This phlegm would well-nigh drive her mad.

"No one can tell what he's thinking! After four years I don't know him at all."

"Nor do I," Conneau, the friend of his youth, would murmur.

De Morny would laugh:

"Bah, does one ever know very much about any man? And yet, at bottom, my dear child, it is better so."

This soul, into which they despaired of penetrating, was like all souls, a confused and shadowed region, where courage and weakness, frankness and suspicion, sensuality and indifference, gayety and melancholy, the urge to act, fatalism, and the need to dream crisscrossed, alternated, and mingled, resulting in strange composites, full of sharp contrasts and incongruities. Yet in it kindness was never elbowed aside by any bitterness of feeling. For, invariably generous, Louis Napoleon was incapable of meanness.

* * *

It is true that during those autumn weeks of 1851, when the Prince, a prey to his doubts, was eating out his heart, his entourage itself is divided with regard to his course of action. If Miss Howard cries up the *Coup d'État,* Hortense Cornu, his Arenenberg comrade, still very dear to him, protests that she will cease seeing Louis if he tries to diminish the powers of the Constitution by force. Vaudrey, the soldier of Strasbourg, insists that the lawyers be flung into the Seine, and Fleury seconds

him. Vieillard and Mocquard wrap up prudential counsels in circumlocutions. Conneau is still the *Carbonaro* of 1831; Laity, a Republican before he had become a Bonapartist, wishes Louis Napoleon to respect the law, at the expense of an eclipse which will assuredly be only temporary.

Yet by force of temperament or of intelligence, two men dominate the concert, two men who while jealous of and detesting each other, tell the Prince the same thing: that his unique, his first duty, is to save France from the disorder into which the Assembly is hurrying it.

First there is Persigny.

He wants the Empire, the return, pure and simple, to the Napoleonic régime. He wants it as a sectarian. No considerations can arrest him. He is rudeness, brutality, just as he is fidelity, personified. He has supplied Louis Napoleon with ardent and reliable lieutenants: Fleury, the hardy "African" officer, equally fond of pleasure and danger; Saint-Arnaud, a condottiere who has staked his fortune on his sword; Vieyra, a colonel of the National Guard, ready for anything and everything.

Persigny harasses and torments Louis Napoleon, who on various occasions has to forbid his further importunities. But all in vain:

"Name the day," is his surly refrain.

"Wait," the Prince repeats, shrugging his shoulders.

If he decides to act, Persigny will not be his choice of an executant.

He might answer for a surprise, at Strasbourg, at Boulogne. But this time the enterprise is too delicate, the clockwork too complex. It calls for adaptability as well as for energy, for manipulation, for secrecy.

De Morny possesses all these qualities.

Louis had known him in London, in '48. He had avoided him at the beginning of his presidency. He found it hard to endure his sight. De Morny, who called himself the Count de Morny, was his half-brother, the son of Hortense and General de Flahaut. The fact was common property. Louis did not find it out until after his mother's death, and it lacerated him. When de Morny, a deputy, greeted him in the corridors of the Assembly, he barely answered him. De Morny would scan him with his bright, intelligent eyes, as though mentally weighing him. Then he would turn on his heels with a careless wave of the hand.

Little by little they become better acquainted, through the intermediary of Count Walewski, son of the Emperor and the Polish woman. De Morny appears at the Élysée—and reappears. He establishes his footing there. By degrees, Louis Napoleon is won over. He does not, however, get to like him unreservedly; his feelings with regard to this uterine brother of his are apt to vary. He always recalls the one thing whose memory seems to preclude intimacy. De Morny, incidentally, attached no importance to it. Familiarity breeds contempt.

He is the most supple, ingenious, and adroit of men. Physically he resembles Louis Napoleon, and, in addition, is possessed of those qualities the latter lacks. He is gay, unconstrained, and elegant. He talks well. His manners are exquisite. He is a born duke. He enjoys an ambiguous reputation as a dandy and a business man. He is intimately familiar with the seamy side of politics, and knows the strength and weaknesses of every party leader. His contempt for people in general is absolute.

A mad spendthrift, a frenetic gambler, at the Jockey Club as well as the Stock Exchange, he found himself in a frightful situation in November, 1851. Posters announced the seizure for sale of his hôtel in the Champs-Élysées, known to all Paris as "Fido's dog-kennel," because it adjoined that of his mistress, the Countess Le Hon. Betrayed by cards, race-horses, and the stock-market, he was lost unless some major change of fortune intervened.

It was at that moment, silencing his last scruples, that Louis Napoleon decided in favor of the *Coup d'État*.

The Rubicon

It is a few minutes to ten. The *soirée* at the Élysée is drawing to an end. The Prince-President's guests are beginning to take leave. This Monday had not been a very sprightly one; on the contrary, almost dismal. In the two great *salons* and in the gallery on the ground floor, beneath the chandeliers, and the sconces filled with tapers, were grouped less than a hundred people: members of the Diplomatic Corps, ministers and their wives, deputies, officers, a few distinguished strangers. And there were friends of the Prince: Mrs. Norton, the Marquis of Douglas, old Count de Flahaut, de Morny's father, Doctor Véron, de Heeckeren, de Beaumont, Vassy, de Morny. Persigny had not put in an appearance.

In evening dress, without decorations, leaning against the mantel, his head inclined toward his shoulder, Louis Napoleon, his aid-de-camp Béville on his left, spoke to his guests as they filed past, taking their leave. To him came his cousin Mathilde, now Countess Demidoff, but separated from her husband after two years of chagrin and ill usage. She was taller almost by a head than Louis, already very stout, and wore a straw-colored satin dress which trailed after her in abrupt folds. Her carriage, her face, her smile, were imperial.

Unquestionably Louis Napoleon no longer loved her. But he retained for her a warm feeling of friendship. She had witnessed his days of happiness, had been the

object of his first longings, the one for whom he had dared Strasbourg. He no longer loved her, yet her sight inspired tenderness. And at times, in his heart of hearts, he regretted that their lives had not become united.

He whispered into her ear:

"Think of me to-night, Mathilde."

She raised her face and looked at him. He made an evasive gesture and, aloud, proffered a banal phrase.

For a moment he spoke with Véron, the stout director of the *Opéra,* shook hands with and had a courteous word for various ladies. His face gave no hint as to what he might be thinking. His eyes were inscrutable, half-closed upon who could say what dreams. His great moustache and his chin-tuft made him look taller than he would have seemed clean-shaven. With a sign of the hand he summoned Colonel Vieyra, recently appointed chief of staff of the National Guard. He drew him close by a button of his uniform and whispered:

"Colonel, do not betray any emotion. Tonight is the night. Can you guarantee that tomorrow the drums will not beat to arms in the street?"

"I can, Your Highness. I will see that the drum-heads are stove in."

"Good. Report at staff headquarters at six o'clock in the morning, not before."

He gave General de Flahaut a pleasant word. He knew that his son kept him informed of all that was going on.

The memory of his mother made him feel a genuine aversion for this man whom she had adored. Yet he spoke to him, as always, with exceeding courtesy.

In turn Saint-Arnaud, the Minister of War, drew near.

Louis Napoleon shook hands with him without interest. He had seemed to avoid him throughout the evening.

Saint-Arnaud, tall, spare and angular, thrust a formidable head above his high, gold-embroidered collar; he had dyed hair, sunken eyes, a nose like the beak of a bird of prey. Recalled from Algeria, thanks to Fleury, he was two-thirds cut-throat and one-third hero.

Béville leaned over the President. The *salons* were nearly empty. Louis Napoleon left the mantelpiece, and, saluting on all sides, moved slowly away to the room which was used as a council chamber, and through which he always retired. It looked as though there were some business to which he must attend.

The last visitors left.

* * *

Persigny, Mocquard, and Saint-Arnaud were already gathered in the Prince's cabinet when he entered with the Prefect and Béville. He motioned them to sit.

"No one has the least suspicion," he said.

At this moment de Morny, for whom they were waiting, arrived. He came from the *Opéra-Comique*. In his box, a short time ago a friend, Mme. Liadières, had asked him:

"If there's a general sweeping-out, as they say there'll be, which side will you be on?"

"Positively on the side of the broom-handle."

Louis Napoleon, seated at his desk, opened a drawer with a small key suspended from his watchchain. He took out an envelope upon which was written a word in blue pencil. His hand closed on it.

"Here are all the necessary papers. The part to be

played by each of you is set down. All that remains is to carry them out."

He let the envelope fall. On it could be read the word: "Rubicon."

He opened it.

"Here," he said to Béville, "are the proclamations to be put up at daybreak. You will take them to the National Printing Office. The director, M. de Saint-Georges, is waiting for them. They will be printed in sections under the surveillance of municipal guards already posted by Fleury. Then you will get them at once to the Prefect of Police, who will see that they are pasted on the walls of Paris."

Before handing the copy to his aid-de-camp, Louis Napoleon's glance dwelt for a moment on the opening lines:

"In the name of the French people:
The National Assembly is dissolved.
Universal suffrage is reëstablished.
The French people is summoned to a general election.
Martial law . . ."

The Prince breathed deeply.

"Go," he said; "we have no time to lose. By five o'clock the proclamations should be up."

Colonel Béville clicked his heels, saluted and left.

Louis Napoleon took a paper and offered it to de Morny.

"You are appointed Minister of the Interior in place of M. Thorigny. Take possession of the ministry but not until daybreak."

Seated in the farthest corner of the room, Persigny's strong bulldog face was contracted. De Morny, opposite

him, smiled the smile he had inherited from Talleyrand, very subtle, disdainful, icily courteous.

Until then Persigny had counted upon receiving this post, which would have given him charge of the operation. The Prince had preferred de Morny to him. Yet he did not intend to be biased in favor of either of the rivals.

"My dear Persigny," said he, in order to soften the blow. "I have reserved what is, perhaps, the most dangerous rôle for you. At four o'clock you will make your way to the Military School, and, together with Colonel Espinasse, make sure that the Palais-Bourbon is occupied by the troops and the questors arrested. The Colonel is brave and reliable, but unexpected resistance might give rise to serious incidents. . . . I will feel at ease the moment I know you are there."

Turning to Saint-Arnaud:

"You, General, will see to it that the brigades of the Army of Paris are stationed in the positions determined upon, and organize the state of siege. You have thirty thousand men, haven't you?"

"Thirty-three thousand, Monseigneur."

"They will be more than enough. Make the best possible showing of your forces, but try to use them as little as possible. Keep in close touch with M. de Morny. I hope that there will be no bloodshed. Above all, no dead men, no dead men," he repeated, with a slight shiver. "No dead men—I'll have none of them."

"If barricades are built," said Persigny, "they'll have to be carried."

"Take them by surprise."

"We'll have to fire on rioters if we are to reëstablish order."

"Will there be any rioting?"

"I'm afraid there will," said de Morny. "Paris fancies it is Republican. But leave it to me. I'll not be heavy-handed."

"Too gentle a hand is easily disarmed. Watch yourself," said Persigny, somberly, "one must insist on having what one wants."

"Yes, yes, indeed. Whatever is necessary will be done. Not too much, but enough. Will you entrust it to me, Your Highness? If so, allow me to handle it. If not, let some one else take charge of the business. You can easily find some one."

His lips narrowed beneath his waxed moustache, his glance disdainful, he snapped out his brief phrase with his back to Persigny. The Prince shrugged his shoulders:

"You have a free hand," he said coldly.

De Morny bowed slightly and addressed the Prefect of Police:

"In that case, my dear sir, my orders are as follows: You will, one by one, summon all the police commissioners and officers to police headquarters. There you will give them the orders of arrest issued for Generals Cavaignac, Lamoricière and Changarnier, for Colonel Charras, Messrs. Thiers, Greppo, Baze, Roger du Nord. . . . Here, I've made out the entire list, sixteen in all. . . . That should answer for the first day. Tomorrow we'll see further. These arrests should be made with tact and courtesy."

"Monsieur de Maupas, I especially recommend that you treat Generals Cavaignac and Lamoricière with consideration," said Louis Napoleon.

"And Thiers as well," added de Morny.

"And Thiers as well. . . . But keep your eye on him, in particular. The little man is quite capable of slipping through your fingers. . . . It would have pleased me could I have dispensed with these arrests. But M. de Morny feels that they are absolutely necessary."

"They are if we wish our enterprise to meet with the minimum of risk and resistance," said de Morny. "Do not let us repeat the error of the 18th of Brumaire. If General Bonaparte, as Sieyès proposed to him, had begun by having the leaders of the Five Hundred arrested, he would almost have lost the day at Saint-Cloud. Deprived of its chiefs, and thus dealt a body blow, the National Assembly will disperse after a bit of clamor."

"The second of December will not be Brumaire," said Mocquard, who knew his history. "Your uncle, Highness, was outside the government, and that government was decidedly more powerful than he himself imagined. The Assembly which opposes you is merely an entity, without a majority, lacking any stronger ties with the country at large. It gets in your way, so you brush it aside."

Mocquard was right when he declared it no Brumaire. And the Prince Louis Napoleon was not General Bonaparte. The same thought occurred to them both at the moment.

The hero of Italy and of Egypt was the man of action, laborious, precise, who enjoyed showing himself, talking of himself; an admirable comedian, susceptible to kindness, yet often harsh and insulting, passing from contempt to excessive confidence, a profound *egoist*. . . .

The son of Hortense was a man of dreams, timid, impressionable, and romantic, lost in musing, secretive, a

friend of silence. He was not a good liar. Generosity personified, a faithful friend, not given to anger, he had been born polite. And he was kind.

Bonaparte acted. Louis conspired. He acted when it was necessary, with entire courage. But, molded by exile, by imprisonment, he was above all his true self at his work-table, lost in vague day-dreams, which every day assumed different shapes. Napoleon, on occasion, grew discouraged. Toward the end of his career, at Fontainebleau, in 1814; at the Élysée, in 1815, he went to pieces. Louis never gave way. Amid the greatest reverses he always looked forward to a change of fortune, sustained by the mute pride which his own disposition heightened, and which made it possible for him to undertake and support anything. Uncle and nephew, perhaps, had nothing in common, save an instinct, a faith that they were beings marked by fate for the exercise of power. Both of them fatalists, they believed in their star. It led them on to events which they could not foresee. But they knew they were great events.

In the silence which had fallen, Saint-Arnaud's martial voice rang out:

"Order is what the people want; Your Highness will give it them, and glory as well."

"I hope so, General."

"That is a question for the future to decide," said de Morny, a trifle impatiently. "Let us concern ourselves with the present. Monsieur de Maupas, you will send off the deputies under arrest to Mazas. The prison is well built and easy to hold against a sudden assault, should one be attempted. Whom do you wish to entrust

with the command at Mazas, Your Highness? It is an important post."

"Colonel Thirion? . . . suggested Maupas.

"He is a man of distinction," said de Morny.

The President nodded his head in assent.

"You must realize my position. This *Coup d'État* must not be brutally carried out, otherwise, later on, there will be memories hard to efface. What I wish to do is to make a loyal appeal to France, destined to spare it years of trouble and misfortune. Whatever may be written of me in history, I know that I am acting only for the country's good."

He spoke with a deep accent of truth, with pathetic sincerity.

"History, Your Highness, will say that you restored to France the only government which suited her," said Persigny.

"One never knows what posterity's judgment will be. It only sees us from the outside. It only registers results. And yet, gentlemen, you will bear witness, that had not the Assembly treated me as an enemy, I would not have been driven to this extreme."

"Entertain no regrets, Your Highness," said de Morny. "In the situation in which you have been placed, you are obliged to fight it out."

He thought, and so thought they all, that even with an Assembly inclined to listen to reason, Napoleon sooner or later would have been driven to the *Coup d'État*. His race, his name, his character would have forced it upon him.

"Yes . . ." said the Prince.

He rested his chin on his hand. On his ring-finger

shone the plain wedding-ring that had belonged to his mother. He swept all those surrounding him with the veiled glance of his eyes, his lip arched in a faraway smile. A moment long he raised his head and seemed to listen, as though he had heard a noise without.

"Bring me our fortune," he said to Mocquard.

Hortense's old friend disappeared into the adjoining room, and returned carrying a small casket which he handed to the President. Louis Napoleon opened it.

"I have here forty thousand francs in bills, and twenty thousand francs in gold. It is all that is left me. Take half of it, General," he said to Saint-Arnaud; "you will have gratifications to distribute."

The Minister of War refused to take more than ten thousand francs in gold. De Morny pocketed the bills.

"Monseigneur," said M. de Maupas, "I have received a communication from a member of your family. . . ."

"You may speak freely before my friends," said the Prince. "Is it my cousin Napoleon?"

"No, Monseigneur—his father, Prince Jerome. This evening he sent for me to come to the Invalides, in order to ask me to tell you that should you have any need of him, he was at your orders."

For several months past the former King of Westphalia, who had been appointed governor of the Invalides, influenced by his son, had been in the sulks with regard to the Élysée.

"Does he suspect anything?" asked Louis Napoleon, disturbed.

"This is what he said to me, Monseigneur. 'The existing situation is one that cannot long continue. I'm not asking you to tell me your secrets, but within the next

eight days my nephew will have carried out his *Coup d'État*. On the day the President shows himself to the people, the Emperor's brother should be at his side. Let him know this. I will go to the Elysée whenever I am wanted.' "

For a moment Louis Napoleon said nothing. His uncle's throwing in with him brought with it no accession of strength or morale. Jerome and his son were neither well known nor well liked. Yet this adhesion in the moment of danger touched a very sensitive chord of his being. In the past Jerome had wounded him cruelly by separating him from Mathilde. And after that he had spoken lightly of Queen Hortense. . . . Ah, well, he was atoning for his faults.

"I will take him at his word tomorrow morning," said the Prince. "He shall accompany me when we mount our horses. I shall leave the Élysée at ten o'clock, together with you, Saint-Arnaud, Marshal Narvaez, Marshal Exelmans, General de Flahaut, Magnan, Murat, the officers of my household . . ."

"Take two regiments," said Persigny.

"No. Only my usual escort of cuirassiers. Else the Parisians might think I were afraid."

"At least have them carry pistols."

"As you wish . . . I shall ride as far as the Place de la Concorde, and there pass the troops in review."

"In a general's uniform—that is indispensable," said de Morny.

He smiled. It had just occurred to him that with his veiled eyes, his weary hand, Louis Napoleon looked remarkably like a sick parrot.

The Prince pulled out his watch. Then he rose. All rose.

"Until tomorrow," said he. "If I should be needed tonight, I can be found here at any time. I shall lie down fully dressed."

"You realize, gentlemen," said de Morny, toying with his cane, "that we are all risking our lives."

"Well," said Mocquard, laughing till all his wrinkles showed, "mine is already so far gone that I'm running no great risks!"

Persigny, his eyes on de Morny, of whose desperate situation he was not ignorant, said:

"I myself have nothing to lose, neither a hôtel in Paris, nor a château in the provinces. All I have to give is my blood, and that I'm ready to do."

"It will not be necessary, I trust," said the Prince. "I have entire confidence in our success. Au revoir, gentlemen."

He shook hands with each of them, as calmly as though they had just made a rendezvous for a pleasure excursion.

Mocquard, who had remained at his side, looked out of the window.

"It's raining," he said.

"That's excellent," replied de Morny, on the threshold. "Since I've nothing to do until daybreak, I'll go to the Jockey Club. Daru is expecting me for a game of whist . . ."

At ten o'clock the next morning, in the courtyard of the Élysée, crowded with impatient officers, Louis Napoleon mounted his horse. The cuirassiers of his escort drew their sabers and cried, *Vive l'Empereur!* The Prince, displeased, shrugged his shoulders, and sent off

Fleury to moderate their enthusiasm. He gave the order to leave. A squad of cavalrymen, pistols in hand, preceded him. On his English saddle-horse, head erect, in a general's dress uniform, he rode alone, ten feet in advance of his suite. Behind him rode Jerome Bonaparte and Saint-Arnaud, bit to bit, followed by Marshal Exelmans, General Narvaez, Flahaut senior, Magnan, Daumas, Murat, Edgar Ney, Fleury. . . . They took the Faubourg Saint-Honoré at a walk. A brigade of infantry lined the street. There were a number of curiosity-seekers on the sidewalks, and faces peered from every window. A few stray cheers sounded as the Prince passed. He saluted. But when he reached the rue Royale, protestations greeted his ear. Groups of men cheered the Republic. He seemed quite unmoved. At the Place de la Concorde General de Cotte, at the head of his brigade, catching sight of the cortège, shouted, *"Vive Napoléon!"* The soldiers cheered. Some cried: "On to the Tuileries!"

The iron gates of the Tuileries' gardens were open. Louis Napoleon rode up to the great central fountain-basin, for a moment tempted to bring matters to an end at once by installing himself in the palace. But Jerome, raising himself to his level, murmured:

"Louis, it would be premature!"

He shivered and swung his horse about.

Crossing the Seine, he reached the Palais-Bourbon Square, guarded by several companies of horse-police. There the crowd received him with bravos, which he acknowledged with a smile. Returning, he slowly rode past Rewbell's Lancers, drawn up in the Champs-Elysées and by way of the gardens reëntered the presidential mansion.

There good news awaited him. The leaders of the Assembly, arrested with but little resistance, were already at Mazas. Two hundred and twenty representatives, unable to enter the Legislative Palace, had gathered in the town-hall of the Tenth District, rue de Grenelle, in order to proclaim Louis Napoleon's deposition. They were rounded up in a mass and imprisoned in the d'Orsay Barracks.

"All is going well," de Morny told his brother. "All legal resistance is at an end."

"There remains the revolt," replied the Prince.

"Bah," said de Morny, carelessly, "if it develops I'll take care of it."

* * *

The following day, December 3, the deputies of the Left, Victor Hugo, Schoelcher, Michel de Bourges, Carnot, Jules Favre, tried to raise the suburbs. The cobblestones were torn up. Barricades cut off the laboring quarters from the central part of the city. De Morny gave orders to carry them by assault. The soldiers obeyed. Baudin died a hero's death on the barricade in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine. There was shooting and sabering along the boulevards.

In spite of his phlegmatic nature Louis Napoleon now seemed disturbed. "The somewhat rough work of the police," which de Morny had mentioned, did not appear to be turning out well. In any event, it was costing dear. These corpses, which the Prince did not want, were already laid out in quantities on the flag-stones of the Hôtel-Dieu Hospital. In the provinces alarming riots were staged in defense of the Republic. And though the

north and the east of France were quiet, the south was rising.

Saint-Arnaud, Persigny, and de Morny extorted an order for vigorous repressive measures from the President. A state of siege was declared in thirty-two departments. A hundred thousand citizens were cast into prison. Mixed commissions and councils of war, rivaling in zeal, deported all suspects to Lambessa or Cayenne. Eighty-eight deputies were exiled from France.

On December 20, a general election, by seven million votes against six hundred thousand, approved of Louis Napoleon, and confirmed his presidency for ten years to come. Democracy had been put down. Only on the coinage did the Republic continue to exist.

PART THREE

Eugénie

At the Tuileries, in the Emperor's work-room, near a huge desk laden with papers, a woman sat stiffly erect in an armchair.

Napoleon III, his hands behind his back (a pose of his uncle's originally affected, but now become habitual to him) walks up and down with hesitant steps. He wore civilian dress, and this everyday garb emphasized the disparity between his long torso and his short legs, somewhat bowed by frequent riding, more than the uniform. He had grown stouter; his complexion had improved. He avoids his visitor's glance and she says nothing, less because of etiquette than of her own choice. After the first words of greeting, for all they are so cordial, this silence which she persists in spinning out embarrasses the Emperor.

He pauses in front of the window, with its deep embrasure framing a view of gardens which winter has stripped and shrunken, and turning to his cousin:

"Mathilde," he says, "I asked you here to tell you a secret. I have decided to marry. As yet I have not said a word to any one. Perhaps you are surprised."

"No, Louis, it does not surprise me."

"Ah, gossip already has been busy, I see. . . . But no matter. I have decided (he stressed the word *decided*) to marry Mlle. Eugénie de Montijo."

The Princess never moves, but her features, which re-

semble those of the goddess Ceres, harden and turn marmoreal.

"I love Mlle. de Montijo," the Emperor continues, "I esteem her character. Her family is a most honorable one. The union is one that would make me personally happy, and which will content the whole country once it comes to know its future sovereign."

Still the Princess says not a word. Yet her hostile silence leads the Emperor to take a firmer tone.

"I need not hide from you, my dear Mathilde, that I have obstacles to overcome, prejudices to vanquish. You know what courts are. I count on your aid. It is necessary, at this moment, of such importance to me, that in the eyes of France and all Europe, my family give me its support. And you, in first instance, are my family. Your father, and even your brother, will have to do as you do when, by your attitude, you show that you are in sympathy with me. That is what I expect of you, Mathilde, and I tell you so frankly. . . . Am I mistaken?"

"I fear you are."

"You have seen your brother, Mathilde. He has prejudiced you against me. Anything unpleasant that he can manage to put my way . . ."

"Napoleon is not free from blame where you are concerned. He is hot-headed and talks indiscreetly. Yet he loves you and so do I. You do not doubt this, I hope? If we do not tell you the truth, from whom can you expect to hear it?"

Mathilde has purposely dropped her usually familiar thee-thouing. It puts the Emperor out of countenance.

"The truth . . ."

"No doubt you do not care to hear it from me. You want me to approve of your project in order to please you? I'm sorry, Louis, but it is something I cannot do, either as a Frenchwoman or a Bonaparte."

The Emperor resumes his pacing to and fro, without any sign of irritation. Nevertheless, in his turn, he uses the "you."

"You refuse me your approval? Why? I do not understand. You know that it is necessary for me to marry. The nation wishes it. The great corporate bodies of the state are pressing me. Your father, King Jerome, has been tormenting me with regard to this subject for a long time."

"I recognize that your marriage is a necessity, Sire. Your first thought should be to assure a continuance of the dynasty."

"Oh, assure the continuance of the dynasty! Can it ever be assured? Remember our uncle, in 1811. Never before had the world witnessed such power and good fortune. And yet the Emperor and his son died in exile."

"Yes," answers Mathilde, firmly, "yet you reign because they did."

He replies, with a certain veiled reproach:

"Rest assured that I have no illusions with regard to my personal merits."

"You do not grasp my thought, Louis. We owe you the Emperor's resurrection. No one denies it. Yet since we are speaking without reserve, you must allow me to say that if, in view of your rank, you find marriage a necessity, then your true friends think you might make a different choice."

"My friends! I had friends before I became Emperor."

"Perhaps they were not meant to be servants."

He crosses his arms, sadly. Was Mathilde alluding to Henriette Cornu, whom she did not like, though she esteemed her and who, a true Republican, had not appeared at the Tuileries since the Prince-President had carried out his *Coup d'État?*

"I no longer see Hortense," he says. "But I know how she feels. She will not blame me for marrying to please myself, and for disregarding interested advice."

"That is quite possible. She is romantic. But M. de Morny and M. de Persigny, who are professional politicians, what do they think of this fine idea?"

"De Morny at first raised a few objections. But he soon grasped my motives."

"M. de Morny will always be a diplomat. . . . It is his Talleyrand blood, you know . . ."

"Mocquard, who is so attached to me—you'll not suspect his devotion, I hope—congratulates me."

"He does?"

"He thinks as I do, that Mlle. de Montijo has all the qualities calculated to make me happy."

"M. de Mocquard has aged greatly, so far as I can see. How about M. de Persigny? You do not mention him. Not that I like him. Not at all. But he has been so close to you. . . ."

"Persigny," says the Emperor, embarrassed, "Persigny . . ."

"Well?"

Blushing slightly, he comes to a decision.

"Persigny spoke to me in such a way that I had to put him in his place. For the time being we are at odds."

"I am not surprised. He is courageous, in any event. What did he say to you?"

"He told me the Second of December was lost effort if this was to be the result. But you know how he is—headstrong, jealous. It is enough for a project not to emanate from him. He wanted a princess. . . ."

"He is right. From the moment on that you do not marry a Frenchwoman, you must only enter some reigning house. I thought this was what you had in mind."

The matter had, in fact, been mooted. At first the Infanta Christina had been considered. But Napoleon III found her too homely. His cousin, the Duchess of Hamilton, next induced him to ask for the hand of the Swedish Princess Vasa. It was refused him. He then turned to the Princess Adelaide von Hohenlohe, Queen Victoria's niece by marriage. The English Court had held the matter in abeyance, no doubt thinking that the new throne was not sufficiently stable.

The Emperor shrugs his shoulders.

"I had thought of it, my dear. But the princesses who were approached had no use for me. After all, why must it be a princess? For political reasons? To what end? It was certainly not a success in our uncle's case. Raised to the level of the ancient dynasties by the force of a new principle, why should I try to age my blazon by a princely alliance? My insinuating myself into the family of kings will not make them more inclined to accept me. On the contrary, I must always remember my origin. I am a parvenu; I wish to remain one. It is a title of honor because it was bestowed on me by the suffrages of a great

people. What do I care about European opinion? I have only France to consider . . ."

"Your family as well . . ."

"My family! . . ."

He does not end his sentence. He might reply that this family, which had always treated him so harshly and ungratefully, owed him everything; that he had loaded it with titles and donations, that it was dependent upon him. He does not say so, out of delicacy, and also because Mathilde is the only one who has shown him any affection, and whom he can trust. He does not wish to wound her. He hopes to convince her. It will not be easy, yet he does not despair.

"From youth on," he says, "I dreamt of marrying for love. My mother advised me to do so. You cannot have forgotten that, Mathilde. And you yourself have done so."

With her firm, ringless hand she strikes the arm of her chair in her rage.

"And a nice mess I made of it! Do not imitate me, Louis!"

In spite of the energy with which she speaks, tears come to her eyes.

If only she had not contracted that stupid, degrading marriage, at the moment Louis had entered his prison! If, through weakness, the appeal of the senses, love of luxury—and perhaps, too, in order to pay the debts of her father, that incorrigible grown-up child—she had not given herself to Demidoff, to be beaten and abandoned by him so soon after, she would now have been Louis's wife. She need only have given him a sign. He always had loved her. She could have married him after his

escape or while he was still President. And to-day she would be Empress of France . . .

He sees her swelling bosom beat more tempestuously under the white lace of her bodice. He is easily touched. He takes her hand.

His gentleness deceives her. She thinks that he is hesitating, that she has regained her olden influence over him. She imagines she can make him change his mind, and rushes headlong to the attack.

"It is impossible for you to marry Mlle. de Montijo, Louis. You must know that there has been a good deal of gossip about her, and about her mother as well. Her nomadic existence in the watering-places, the pleasure cities of all Europe, has not prepared her to play a sovereign's part. . . ."

He interrupts her, and his voice is rough.

"That is all untrue, Mathilde. You should not lend yourself to tattle of this kind. It is unworthy of you. The Montijo family is Spanish, but it has claims on French gratitude. The father of the girl whom I now regard as my fiancée, served the Emperor as a colonel of artillery. It was he who, in 1814, on the Buttes-Chaumont, in defense of Paris, fired the last cannon-shots against the Allies. The Montijo are of the bluest blood to be found in Spain. They have a threefold right to the grandeeship. The countess was *camarera-mayor,* chief keeper of the royal wardrobe, to Queen Isabella. It is the highest Court charge known among our neighbors. Mlle. Eugénie's sister is married to the Duke of Alba . . ."

"And on her mother's side, the Kirkpatricks? . . ."

"They come from good Irish gentlefolk. They are the equals of the Bonapartes."

"Of the Bonapartes before Napoleon, perhaps. But then came Napoleon. He reigned, you yourself are reigning. Have you forgotten it?"

"You cannot deny that the Countess de Montijo and her daughters belong to the most exclusive European social circles. And, incidentally, it was in your own home, at a *soirée*, that I met them."

"Yes, but I entertain all Paris . . ."

He does not take up her contemptuous reply. Mathilde shall not make him lose his self-control.

"I love Eugénie de Montijo, and I am convinced that she does not regard me with indifference."

"She is not in love with you, Louis. She is in love with your crown."

Before the Emperor, facing the great desk, stands a lofty mirror. Quite unintentionally, he catches sight of his own reflection. His sparse hair has given him an enormous forehead. Beneath the hollow arch of his brows his eyes are heavy. His cheeks have grown clammy. And as though this face of 1853 which he is wearing were a mask, there rise before him other faces, the successive faces he had worn during his life. There is his English face, his Boulogne face, his Strasbourg face. They are narrower, firmer, more shapely modeled. Yet their look is the same. The last he sees is the face he wore in Arenenberg, when he made love to Mathilde. It is really the face of an adolescent, tender, open . . ."

He sighs.

"What will you have, Mathilde? I'm no longer twenty-eight."

This time she hangs her head, and it is not until a long minute has passed that she resumes:

"Louis, I am trying to be as just as I am frank. After all, Mlle. de Montijo may be the honorable daughter of a house good enough to marry into our own. I admit it. And still, that is not enough. She is beautiful and she pleases you; but you only see her as she intends you to see her. You do not know her. But I know her—more or less. And I tell you she is not the woman whom you should associate with your existence and seat upon the throne. Eugénie de Montijo will never truly be an empress. She is a woman of fashion; no doubt she knows how to manage a *salon;* but she will never rule a court. She will evoke an atmosphere of brilliancy, but never of grandeur. In your dealings with other sovereigns you will be exposed to insult. They will forgive you for being a parvenu. They will have to; you are the son of the Revolution and you are backed by France. But that the Empress should be a parvenu as well—that will be too much. You have attained a level where one must give up individual preferences, and you will betray your dignity by a collegiate marriage.

"Yet I shall be doing no more than my uncle did when he married my grandmother Josephine."

"It was by no means the best thing he did. Besides, he was only a general when he married Mlle. de Beauharnais. And, in any event, she was a Frenchwoman."

"She, too, was only a woman of fashion. And yet all France loved and mourned her."

"If Mlle. de Montijo were French I would say no more. But I am only too certain that she will never feel, speak, or act as we do. She is a Spaniard, with

antiquated political ideas, narrowly devout, who will put the interests of the Church before those of the land over which she reigns. France will resent that."

"France is Catholic."

"Yes, but it clings to its spiritual independence. Even the kings did not tamper with that. For the sake of Rome and the Pope, you will get yourself into all sorts of difficulties, due to your wife's influence."

"Do you think I am so easily influenced?"

"Not at present, perhaps. But the time will come when the home suasion, insinuating itself day by day, will act on you as it does on all men. . . . Sooner or later you will be swayed. Mlle. de Montijo is ambitious. At present she is avid of honors; tomorrow she will covet power. Little by little your determination will yield. You will govern in accordance with her views. And hers are the views of the past. France entrusted herself to you because you promised to be a progressive ruler."

Napoleon listens to her without a single indication of impatience. In his hand he holds an ivory paper-cutter, with which he lightly taps the documents heaped on his desk, awaiting his signature. He smiles gently:

"Mathilde," he says, "I have carefully thought over all you've been telling me. And you must not believe that I have made a haphazard decision. Yet I have made one. I shall marry Mlle. de Montijo because I love her, because I respect her, because I have given her my promise, and because I wish to do so."

The Princess's face reddens with anger. She rises, tall and splendid, and approaches him:

"You will not do that, Louis!" she flings in his face.

"I will do just that."

"Louis, for our name's sake, for the sake of your mother's memory, for the sake of whatever friendship you still may feel for me!"

Her great proud eyes overflow with tears. Slowly the woman of the Clan sinks to her knees. He at once stoops to raise her. Her hands clasped in his, she murmurs:

"If you marry her you are no Bonaparte . . ."

He leads her back to the armchair and makes her sit. He then sits down himself and, stressing every syllable, says:

"You forget yourself, Mathilde. Do not insist further. I have given my word."

"You have given your word! A nice mess you've made of it! Take it back again. You'll be able to compensate for it in some way, moral or other. Have you any scruples?"

"I have scruples, yes, and I did not expect that a woman like you would treat an obligation so lightly. You pain me greatly, Mathilde."

She rises, discouraged. Sketching the short curtsy called for by etiquette, she says:

"I believe, Sire, that all I can do is to beg Your Majesty to dismiss me."

He looks at her, sadly:

"May I hope that you will attend my wedding?"

"Is that a command?"

"No, it is not a command. I shall never command you to do anything. It is the plea of a friend, a relative, of a man to whom you owe some affection because, in spite of circumstances, he has loved and always will love you."

He speaks in a hollow voice. Mathilde's emotion nearly suffocates her. The nobility of such an appeal

goes straight to her heart. Yet, too proud so quickly to admit defeat, she merely answers:

"I will think it over, Sire."

Bowing, she moves to the door. The Emperor escorts her. Neither speaks again.

When he returns to his desk, Napoleon lights a cigarette and murmurs:

"It's a pity. Poor Mathilde! What an Empress she would have made!"

Love

Did Napoleon love Eugénie de Montijo? Had his heart been taken by storm in that romantic adventure? Or was it no more than the lust of the flesh? Did not one have to allow, in his case, for the impetuous desire of the man of forty-five for a woman much younger than himself, one who resisted without discouraging, evaded while casting an inviting glance as she fled? . . . He pursued her, and this ardor for a time restored the fires of his youth. He cannot, he does not wish to master himself. Despite his surface coldness, he had inherited his mother's quick sensuality. His liaisons and escapades had been many and varied in kind. When a recluse, as in Ham, every skirt drew his glance.

Not long after the *Coup d'État* and that plebiscite which put sovereign power into his hands for ten years to come, making him, in the likeness of the First Consul, the king of the Republic, the Prince-President had noticed Eugénie de Montijo at Princess Mathilde's and later, though he did not yet reside there, at the Tuileries, where, every Monday, as formerly at the Elysée, he received the official world and strangers of distinction. Mlle. de Montijo had come, accompanied by her mother, a large, exuberant woman, a trifle Bohemian in manner who, since she had fallen into disgrace at the Spanish Court, found that Madrid bored her, and in order to distract herself, went flying all over Europe, haunting the cities where life

was gay. In Paris, her name gave her the *entrée* among the aristocracy. But she preferred the society of artists and writers. She had been on intimate terms with Stendhal. Her best friend in France was Mérimée.

Eugénie, her youngest daughter, brought up in the Convent of the Sacred Heart, in the rue de Varenne, had been educated as a French girl. Nevertheless, her voice retained that somewhat harsh inflection which marked her as a Spaniard. At twenty-seven she was still unmarried. She had refused, so it was said, the Dukes of Assuna and of Sesto. What did she expect? People were surprised, and did not always express their surprise politely.

She was blonde and quite tall. She had the transparent complexion of the red-haired. Her drooping shoulders were blooming and beautiful. Her head rose on its long, flexible white neck, with a bold, almost virile grace. Her eyes, not far apart, vividly blue, often had a hard gleam, and were underlined with a stroke of black crayon. She had a strong nose and a small mouth, enlivened with a suggestion of rouge. She carried herself like an Amazon, with freedom and assurance, and with greater pride than modesty. One felt she was impetuous, tenacious, capable of devotion and courage. She had a tincture of letters, a good memory, and a finished acquaintance with the manners of good society. She spoke well and often. At bottom she had no more than a few ideas. Her Catholicism was as sincere as it was intransigent. Louis Napoleon talked to her. He was struck with her decision of spirit. Even more by her physical attractiveness. She knew how to make the most of it. Her dress was rich and studied, contrary to custom in the case of young French girls. In

fact, her charm was womanly. And it was herein, above all, that she pleased the Prince. He took a connoisseur's delight in the external evidences of her beauty: her radiant and mobile face, her rounded and supple waist, her long, delicate legs. Her image dwelt in the twilight of his lowered eyes. He disrobed, he caressed her. He wanted this woman and he meant to have her. He had had whatever he wanted, because, no doubt, he had desired it strongly enough. This time he would once again succeed. At what cost? As yet he could not tell. Without putting his thought into words, he probably imagined that this lovely Spaniard who accepted the marks of his favor with pleasure, would end by falling into his arms without stopping at the altar. He was mistaken.

The Countess and Mlle. de Montijo had been invited to attend the hunts which—again reviving an imperial tradition—Louis Napoleon gave each November at Fontainebleau. As an expert in elegance he admired Eugénie in the saddle. She was a ravishing horsewoman. They had some asides. The Prince himself took her to visit the apartments of Marie-Antoinette, whom the young girl had adored ever since she had learned her story.

On November fourteenth, her birthday, he presented her with a bouquet, and the handsome roan she had been riding. Nothing, thus far, that outpassed what gallant consideration and respectful sympathy might dictate. No one, among those surrounding the Prince, suspected that this flirtation might go further. And yet a good part of the way had already been covered.

The guests dispersed. Louis Napoleon returned to Paris.

The plebiscite which was officially to consecrate the reëstablishment of the Empire was initiated. In its institutions, its emblems, in the spirits of all, its result was predetermined. The Prince's triumphal voyage in the departments of the Midi had given rise to imperialist manifestations, the work of Persigny, Minister of the Interior since de Morny's resignation. Persigny knew how to talk to the prefects. Pushing on toward the Empire with all his might, this phantom Republic which never seemed to end exasperated him. On different occasions Louis Napoleon was obliged to soothe him. But Persigny was supported by all his friends, the conspirators of the Second of December. All of them clamored for the Empire. If not for the Prince, then at least on their own account. Only a monarchy could accord them the big salaries, the rich appointments, the wages of the risks run, of the hardships endured before success had come.

Louis Napoleon would have liked to have waited a while longer. Napoleon, his model in all things, had been First Consul for four years. But Persigny forced his hand. When the Prince returned to Paris, he had him pass beneath so many triumphal arches, before so many flags, listen to such ardent acclamations—of which many were heart-felt enough—that Louis Napoleon, persuaded the nation was practically unanimous in its desire, no longer resisted. Besides, he was reaching the normal goal of twenty years of obstinate and hazardous exertion. And France, starving for order and splendor, joyously offered her neck to the collar.

On the second of December, 1852, the anniversary of the *Coup d'État*, the son of Hortense, the agitator of the

Romagna, the refugee of England, the convict of Ham, was proclaimed Emperor.

* * *

Delivered of the ceremonial of his investiture, Napoleon III took time to think of himself. He invited his family, certain ambassadors and ministers, a few personal friends, and Mme. and Mlle. de Montijo to Compiègne.

The initial reception was brilliant, for all its intimacy. The Princess Mathilde received at her cousin's side. Only her brother, Prince Napoleon, who played at Republicanism while he pocketed his appanage and complained about everything, and who took pleasure in crossing the Emperor in every way, owing to his disposition—or was it his ambition?—was sulky and disagreeable. There were promenades in the forest, hunting parties, reviews and theatrical performances in the theater of the château. There was a ball. Napoleon III multiplied his attentions and courtesies to Mlle. de Montijo. The Countess, an artful lady, was never obtrusive. One morning the Emperor took a turn in the park with Eugénie and a few others. The grass on the lawns was covered with dew. The beautiful Spaniard abandoned the Emperor's arm and stooped to pick a sprig of clover from which the dew-pearls rolled.

"See, Your Majesty," she said, "doesn't it look just like a jewel?"

The next day Count Bacciochi brought back from Paris, whither he had gone with the utmost secrecy, an emerald spray of clover on whose each leaf glittered a diamond. Several of the ladies were much perturbed: Mme. Drouyn de Lhuys and Mme. Fortoul, whose husbands were min-

isters, raised their eyebrows. But as yet no one dreamt of a marriage.

One rainy afternoon a game of vingt-et-un—which at Malmaison, together with lotto, had delighted the evenings during the Consulate—was in progress. Mlle. de Montijo did not know the game. The Emperor took a seat near her to explain it. Soon, picking up her hand, she found that she had two face cards. She consulted her adviser with a glance.

"Keep what you have," he whispered; "it's a very good hand."

"No, indeed," she replied, "I'll have all or nothing."

She drew a card. Mme. Fortoul, who was dealing, flung her an ace.

"You have won," said the Emperor.

She turned to him, her face radiant with a smile of triumph.

From that moment on she was an object of unconcealed jealousy. The Maréchale de Saint-Arnaud treated her with the most insulting disdain. Mme. Fortoul insisted on taking precedence of her on every occasion. And, at various times, her ear caught the whispered word, "adventuress." The Emperor, who was very acute, took notice of it all. He said nothing, merely twisting his moustache, reflectively.

Eugénie's pride revolted. She was on the point of doing something rash, of leaving the château. . . . Her mother withheld her. One evening, however, after Mme. Fortoul had insolently elbowed her out of her way at a door, she complained to the Emperor—without reserve. She would no longer remain at a Court where she was exposed to insult. Napoleon, moved, escorted her to the garden.

He tried to appease her. His prayers were vain. Eugénie told him that she would leave the next day. For a long moment he said nothing, then, seeing the young girl's eyes were full of tears, he tore off a tendril of ivy and twisted it into a frail circlet. Placing it on her bowed head he said:

"While you are waiting for the other, which will be your perfect revenge. . . ."

* * *

This time he was determined. He would not change his mind. In his love life, as in his political existence, he was tenacious. And he desired this woman madly; he could not dispense with her presence, which animated and rejuvenated him. Since Mlle. de Montijo would not become his favorite, she should be his wife. She should share his throne. Let his friends and family storm. He had endured greater tempests.

Only—there remained what was humorously known as "the English chain," Miss Howard. She was still his mistress. In Paris he saw her almost every day, either at her home, in the rue de Citque, or at the Tuileries, whither Bàcciochi escorted her in the evening. His passion for her had cooled perceptibly, yet Henriette remained his friend. For six years she had been associated with his life. He owed her much. Miss Howard, informed by Persigny, upbraided him outrageously. He realized how she felt, he pitied her, he wept with her. But he did not yield. And his kindness disarmed her. Her lover's letters, the intimate communications she had received from him, were taken from her home during her absence. No doubt Maupas, the Prefect of Police, could have told her who had given the order. And, such being

the case, what could the erstwhile queen of the London dandies and belle of the Haymarket do, were she to try conclusions with the French Emperor? Henriette Howard made the best of it. She disappeared for a time. Napoleon already had reimbursed her for the moneys she had lent him. He now gave her several additional millions, and pledged himself to further splendid liberalities with regard to her. She was not mercenary, as she had proved. But she was fond of a spacious existence. He bought her a château, made her Countess of Beauregard. She went to London for a few months. Then she returned. They met again, remained friends. And, as though to give a pledge of his esteem, he begged her to take charge of the two children Eleanor Vergeot had borne him in Ham.

* * *

Thus all has been overcome in a few weeks' time. Persigny has at last been silenced, after so many reproaches, patiently endured. De Morny cannot show too much attention to Mme. de Montijo. Drouyn de Lhuys, Minister of Foreign Affairs, who had talked of resigning, has thought better of it. M. Fortoul bows his assent. The Princess Mathilde, the day after the scene at the Tuileries, wrote her cousin, nobly, as she did all things, that she would yield to his wishes. She even agreed to carry the Empress's train in Notre-Dame. Prince Napoleon, though enraged by a marriage which he called grotesque (and which, incidentally, should an heir be born, would deprive him of his presumptive rights to the throne), submitted at his father's behest.

In the main, perhaps, it was Jerome's opposition which the Emperor had feared the most. He had little love for

this mediocre old man, preoccupied with his comforts and his base pleasures. Yet a mysterious virtue haloed that flabby-cheeked face, set off by the gold-embroidered marshal's collar, a reflection of that other, majestic countenance, that illustrious visage sleeping in the sepulcher of the Invalides. He was Napoleon's last remaining brother. . . . That was enough to allow the futile erstwhile King of Westphalia to end his days in an atmosphere of respect. And, besides, he raised no objections. After a life so full of trials he longed for peace. He expected too much from his nephew to displease him. As on the eve of the *Coup d'État,* he sided with him.

There were, in truth, no further obstacles to overcome, not even the trifling one represented by poor Camerata, a young cousin of the Emperor who, in love with Eugénie, had asked her to marry him, and was found dead one morning in his room from a pistol shot. An inveterate gambler, he had sustained heavy losses. This explained a suicide which attracted hardly any attention, and did not shadow the brow of the imperial fiancée.

On Sunday, January 30, beneath a clear sky, the cannon of the Invalides thundered at intervals of a minute. Eugénie de Montijo, conducted by the Duke de Cambacérès, Grand-Master of Ceremonies, arrived at the Tuileries. Prince Napoleon and Princess Mathilde received her at the foot of the grand staircase, and escorted her to the threshold of the Throne Room, where the Emperor was waiting.

She is pale. She advances, straightly erect in her gown of lace with wide flounces, whose long train glides across the marble floor with a light rustling sound with every step she takes. Under the veil which envelops her like

a cloud, her eyes are lowered. Her dream of the past few months is about to come true. She is an Empress. This palace has now become her palace, this people her people, these dignitaries her Court. No doubt she does not love the Emperor; that is, she does not love him ardently, yet her heart is swimming with joy and pride, and with gratitude as well.

In a general's uniform, wearing two orders only—the grand cordon of Napoleon's Legion of Honor and the collar of the Golden Fleece worn by Charles the Fifth—the Emperor comes to meet her, smiling. He looks radiant. She approaches him and gives him her hand.

Drums beat. Bugles blow the salutes. Flags flutter everywhere. From afar a black crowd acclaims them in tremendous eddies of sound. The gilded court carriages leave the Tuileries for Notre-Dame at a walk. Napoleon sits at Eugénie's side within that sparkling stage-coach in which, in 1804, his uncle rode with Josephine to their coronation.

Going back, strange to say, an incident of the Napoleonic past repeats itself; beneath the palace archway the imperial crown which tops the coach comes loose and rolls to the ground. The cortège stops for a moment or so. The Emperor leans out of the coach-door. Fleury dismounts and tells him in a low voice what has happened. The Emperor's face does not change. He is superstitious, but today, no doubt, his happiness is too great to admit of any fear.

At this moment, beside the woman he is about to possess, after months of expectation, surrounded by a people which sings its joy, how can he doubt his good fortune, he who never lost faith in it, even in exile, even

in prison? Eugénie herself has not noticed anything amiss. He does not tell her. . . . They move on. . . . By and by, after the service in Notre-Dame, they will go off like two obscure lovers, to enjoy their honeymoon in secret in the little Château of Villeneuve-l'Étang, buried in the forest of Saint-Cloud. Hortense's son, beneath his illustrious cordons, refuses to think of anything but those moments to come.

The Crimea

"My dear Count," said the Emperor to Walewski, "I authorize you to continue this negotiation with Stockholm, but without committing yourself too deeply. No doubt Sweden would ask nothing better than to march against Russia if we promised her Finland. She must not, however, risk meeting with a setback. I can send her no troops. We must concentrate our entire effort upon the Crimea. Owing to the desperate resistance of the Russians, Sebastopol has become the Gordian knot of this war. It must positively be taken to bring matters to an end. But the place is so strong. Nearly a year has passed since the entrenchments were opened, and we have made no progress."

"If we had attacked suddenly, at the very beginning," remarked de Morny, "we would have carried Sebastopol by storm. Canrobert lacked decision. He let the Russians heap up mountains of earth."

"Pélissier, who promised to perform miracles, has not accomplished much," murmured Napoleon.

Count Walewski, Minister of Foreign Affairs, gathered up the dispatches which he had submitted to the Emperor. Erect, portfolio in hand, he awaited his dismissal. He was tall, haughty, and ceremonious. The son of the Polish woman Napoleon I had loved, his face, with the exception of his whiskers, recalled that of the Corsican; but he objected to any reference to the fact. His mother's heroic

error, without which the Walewski would have amounted to nothing, either in France or in Poland, seemed to him a blot on his escutcheon. He himself was the only person who believed in his diplomatic talents. But with Napoleon III it was a point of honor to place in positions of prominence all those who bore names which had figured in the annals of the First Empire. It was with many threads of this kind that he thought the old tradition could best be reknit.

He gave his hand to Walewski, who bowed.

"Let Persigny know, please, that the Sèvres's dinner-set which Queen Victoria admired when she visited the Tuileries will be sent him. He is to request an audience in order to present it to her, with my compliments. She will appreciate the attention. She has very good taste."

Fialin, the former non-commissioned officer, who now entitled himself Count de Persigny, was French ambassador at London. And in spite of his bearish manners he was not doing so badly there.

"Persigny," sneered de Morny, who sat facing the Emperor, "must excel himself on such occasions. They say he is getting to be a genuine Celadon."

Napoleon raised his eyes with a glance which seemed to pass his interlocutor by, to rise above and move beyond him. . . .

"I am very well satisfied with Persigny," he said.

Walewski bowed once more and went. For a moment the two brothers kept silence. Leaning with his elbows on the great table upon which Napoleon had once spread out his maps and piled his note-books, the Emperor dreamed. The warm September sunlight filtered through three lofty arched windows, from which, framed in the

verdure of the park of Saint-Cloud, might be seen the Orangery, whence General Bonaparte, on the Nineteenth Brumaire, had driven the Five Hundred. De Morny, looking wan, his eyes sunken yet sparkling, a gardenia in his buttonhole, his moustache well waxed, waited.

"I can no longer leave Pélissier in charge of operations. I shall replace him with Niel," said the Emperor.

De Morny shook his bald head.

"He will make the fourth commander-in-chief. That's one too many," he opined. "It will be criticized as showing a lack of perseverance, as almost a confession of impotence."

"Poor Saint-Arnaud! What a loss I suffered in him!"

He regretted his old auxiliary, of the *Coup d'État*, promoted a marshal as a reward, and who had led the French army to the Crimea. On the morrow of the victory of the Alma, Saint-Arnaud had died of the cholera, after atrocious sufferings.

"Yes," said de Morny, "Saint-Arnaud was daring itself. And we need a dare-devil to storm Sebastopol. But Pélissier is just the sort of man who is not wanting in hardihood. Perhaps he is on the eve of success. To replace him might upset everything."

"But he scorns all advice," said Napoleon. "He has not even replied to my last dispatches."

The truth was that General Pélissier, in order to rid himself of the orders and counter-orders which came from Paris, had commanded that the telegraph wires be cut.

This Crimean War, begun eighteen months before, and whose end none could foresee, had become a poignant, depressing burden for the Emperor. He now reproached himself for having undertaken it. There had been plenty

of opposition in his council. De Morny had resolutely combatted it. Only Persigny had approved.

"The Empire is peace!" so the Prince-President had solemnly declared at Bordeaux, while his throne was being swept and garnished for him. And he was quite sincere at the time. For no matter how closely he wished to tread in the footsteps of the founder of his dynasty, he could hardly hope to renew his epoch. A parade-ground general, he had assigned himself another rôle. He would be the Napoleon of progress, of civilization, of the industrial arts. Circumstances, however, had modified his resolution.

He had resented as an insult the tardiness of Czar Nicholas I to recognize the Empire. The title which Nicholas gave him in his first official letter: "Sire and good friend," instead of the traditional: "Sir, my brother," revealed, to those acquainted with protocols, an offensive holding at arm's length. Napoleon had affected to jest about it: "One does not choose one's brothers and one does choose one's friends," he had remarked to the Russian ambassador. Yet the wound to his pride rankled. He was one of those who forget neither injuries nor services.

He thought, and rightly so, that from the very start of his reign, his policy must be one of prestige. Louis-Philippe had fallen so swiftly only because he had disregarded the honor of the nation. France could not help but be grateful to Napoleon III for raising her flag from the dust. It would make it easier to forget the loss of her liberty.

Though the *Coup d'État* had been lightly enough accepted in Paris, the resistance in the provinces had been

serious. Arrests and deportations by the thousand had been necessary. "The police work" of which de Morny had spoken, had ended more than roughly. It would be clever, thought the Emperor, to offer the nation, whose nerves were still upset, the distraction of exterior preoccupations. And thenceforward he watched for an opportunity.

Russia offered it to him in connection with the question of the Holy Land. The Czar wished to wrest from Turkey the protectorate of all Ottoman Greek subjects. The Sultan appealed to England and France. There were negotiations. When Admiral Nachimoff, without a declaration of hostilities, treacherously destroyed the Turkish fleet at Sinope, London proposed armed intervention to Paris. Napoleon did not long hesitate.

He attached importance to British friendship. He had redoubled his advances and pledges to secure it, less, so he said, for the security of the imperial régime, than because of the consideration it would give him. Above all, he saw in it a guarantee of permanency. In his eyes his uncle's one, yet essential fault, had been his implacable struggle with England which, in spite of so many victories, had led him to Waterloo. Napoleon himself had realized it at Saint Helena. Hence, in this connection, he decided to follow a directly opposite policy. The pivot of his diplomatic activity should be agreement with London. Besides, the only genuinely constitutional and liberal power in Europe to which a popular sovereign could logically look for support was the United Kingdom.

These points of political doctrine were strengthened, in his case, by his profound liking for the English, their society, and their manners. He had long lived in London

and had been notably well received there. Among the English aristocracy he had friends and relatives who had ameliorated his exile. Thus England had become a species of second native land to him, one to which he was always to remain true. And the adroit attitude taken by the Court of Saint James, on his accession to the throne, a strong contrast to the reserve of Berlin and Vienna, and the impertinence of St. Petersburg, decided him in favor of the English alliance, even though it were to result in war.

The English and French had landed in the Crimea. Saint-Arnaud gained a brilliant success at the Alma, then slowly sank into the grave. His successor, Canrobert, having invested Sebastopol, found himself confronted with insuperable obstacles. The English fought like heroes, but lacked every necessity. Winter came, a terrible winter. The soldiers froze in the trenches. Balaclava and Inkermann, hard-fought butcheries, decimated the Allies. Sebastopol still held out. Canrobert, disheartened, handed over the command to Pélissier. He was a hard, fierce leader. He had torn up the instructions sent him from the Tuileries. He had rushed the assault of the Malakoff Bastion, the key to the fortress, and had been repulsed with heavy losses. Thereafter he had seemed to relapse into inertia. No one knew anything of his plans. His staff murmured. The Emperor's patience was completely exhausted.

"Do you know, Morny, I regret now that I did not go to the Crimea myself, as I had first intended. With me in command the rivalries of the generals would have been silenced. I would have seen to it that the soldiers were comfortable and have held Pélissier in check."

"It is too late now, in any event," said de Morny, abandoning his air of nonchalance. "Your presence is necessary in Paris. Incidentally, the British Cabinet thinks so, too."

"Oh, the Queen had no objection. It was Persigny who did not want me to go there. He won Palmerston over to his idea."

"Believe me, Your Majesty, he was right. Contrary to his usual custom, he showed insight. With the army, you would be at the mercy of a reverse or an illness. Either would supply a fine pretext for a revolution here."

"What's that you say? The feeling in general is excellent, my dear fellow. Haven't you seen the assurances I am receiving from all sources?"

"One never can tell. . . . It is time which assures the permanency of governments, time alone. One must wait."

In his turn he rose to go.

"Why do you hurry?" asked the Emperor.

"Excuse me, Sire, I have to give an audience at the Legislative Palace."

He had assumed a serious air, the more so since his reasons were frivolous: stock exchange commissions to give; art-dealers to receive; a pretty actress, Alice Ozy—who was to be presented to him as a postulant for a lead rôle in one of his comedies—to meet. For, under the nom de plume of M. de Saint-Rémy, de Morny wrote vaudeville sketches. The Emperor was somewhat displeased with his activities in this field.

"Have patience, Sire," said de Morny, moving toward his brother. "This war may end before we expect it to. And if I may take the liberty of advising you . . ."

"Yes, yes . . ."

"Do not push this Swedish business too far. It will be the part of wisdom to be easy with Russia. At present she is far more our adversary than our enemy. And she may become our friend tomorrow."

Napoleon did not reply. He was aware of the Count's leaning toward a Russian alliance. In this, again, he opposed Persigny, enamored of the alliance with England.

Leaving his seat, he went up to de Morny and gently put his own under his brother's arm.

"Listen to me, August (it was rarely that he addressed him by his first name). I have something else to say to you. And, above all, don't take offense. It is your friend who is speaking, only your friend."

"Yes, Sire."

"All sorts of rumors are current regarding your relations with the Countess Le Hon. It seems that you are partners in too many business affairs. That may be detrimental to you. Take my advice, my dear fellow, and do not go too far in mixing love and money matters."

De Morny haughtily withdrew his arm.

"Your Majesty must know that I have numerous enemies."

"I am aware of it, well aware of it," murmured Napoleon. "But you must be careful . . ."

He had meant to give his brother more of a home thrust, to support some of his reproaches with details. De Morny had embarked in some highly dubious speculations. They even were criticized abroad. Yet in view of de Morny's attitude, the Emperor was afraid of wounding his feelings if he insisted. Out of timidity he said no more, hoping that the allusion made would suffice to

induce the Count to adopt a less hazardous mode of conduct. Yet he was not entirely convinced that it would.

More than any other among his auxiliaries of the Second of December, all of them now provided for, pensioned, placed, had he aggrandized—out of all proportion—this half-brother, who, under the surface aspect of a man of pleasure, revealed the ingenious and virile views of a statesman. He had appointed him President of the Legislative Body. He had loaded him with wealth and honors. He had in mind to raise him to a dukedom. But de Morny would not settle down. Become a prince, he remained an adventurer. Some scandal in connection with him was always to be feared. Hence the Emperor's affection for him was continually leavened with anxiety. De Morny charmed and alarmed him at the same time, even in the manner with which he ostentated their relationship. (Had he not chosen for his coat-of-arms those *fleurs d'hortensia,* those hydrangea blossoms, which spoke their mother's name?)

"Sire," said the Count, steadily, "I must admit that a few months ago I was pecuniarily very much embarrassed, and I have been forced to undertake certain financial operations to reëstablish myself. But I am now once more on a firm footing, and my condition at present could only cause uneasiness to those who wish me ill."

A short, dry cough, a negligent gesture of the hand. Pallid, cold, elegant, superior, he smiled. The Emperor nodded his approbation, pretending to be satisfied with this surface explanation. He often dissembled in this way. Yet he was rarely deceived. He seemed to content himself with the reply given him, while he clung to his own

idea. He had retained the obstinacy of his youth, the gentle stubbornness of the dreamer.

"If you find you are worried in any way, if some unexpected contingency arise, dear friend, do not forget that I am here. I'll always be more than glad to help you."

"I thank you infinitely, Sire, but I trust I shall not need to have recourse to your generosity. It is sufficiently abused by others."

His pout was that of his grandfather Talleyrand, from whom he had inherited his contempt for humanity, certain of his vices, his intelligence . . .

The Emperor shrugged his shoulders. What did a little money amount to, after all?

"Well, good-by for the present. Come to see me often. If I receive any war news I'll see that you get it at once."

* * *

His brother gone, the Emperor returns to his table. Another month, he thinks, and if Pélissier does not bring matters to a head he will leave for the Orient. His entourage will yield. His will only is what counts. He is alone; so fate—and he himself—have decided. One is always alone. Yet he is even more solitary, perhaps, than other men. For he knows no moment of abandon. He lacks that resource, that faculty of expansion, that weakness, as well, of narration, of detailed self-explanation his uncle possessed. Confronting him, surrounding him, he finds only himself. Suddenly elevated to so lofty a height, he resembles a workman hoist upon a scaffolding, and who is conscious only of the sky and winds above him. He feels no vertigo; he knows no fear. He is full of courage, he, who when a child, was so timid. Yet become the target of so many eyes, the focal point of such a

multitude of interests, he feels the need of still further concealing his soul. He is always affable, indulgent, compliant; yet no one any longer has access to his inner self. His feelings, his thoughts are his alone. Formerly he had confidants; now he has only ministers. His mother had been wont to say to him: "You are confiding to a fault. Guard against it." And she would add: "Too many people had a hold on your uncle; he often allowed himself to be guided by old friends or new sycophants. Avoid belonging so exclusively to any one that you can no longer free yourself from them." And he was the more inclined to take his mother's advice because it was the echo of his own profoundest instincts. Not wishing to fall into any one's hands, fearing to be influenced, he became more than ever impassible, more than ever removed. He had lived the life of a conspirator in order to rise to power. He continued to live the life of a conspirator in order to keep it.

A tender and serious vigilance, a wise devotion, renewing those of the mother he could not forget, no doubt, little by little, would have acted upon his mind, would have again unsealed his heart. Yet neither in his family nor among his friends did he meet with that passion of intelligent love which might have overcome his reserve.

The Empress? That violent liking which had led him to her had been appeased by possession. Eugénie's hard and capricious character at times bruised him. He neither thought nor saw as she did. Yet he still had a keen affection for her. He had a feeling for the domestic ties. As a private individual he would have adored his home. Now, especially since an advanced state of pregnancy allows him to hope for an heir, he surrounds Eugénie with

attentions. She appreciates them. She is bound to him by gratitude, by religious duty, and by the compulsions of her position. Not by love. This he knows, but it causes him little suffering. He is already amusing himself elsewhere. They offer an excellent example of the happy royal family. Eugénie leads a gay, brilliant existence, without pretending to play a part in politics. She is informed with regard to major affairs, but one question only concerns her: the interests of the Church. Yet, during this sunrise of the Empire, these do not seem to be in danger. The bishops have naught but praise for the new Constantine. And this war in the Orient, undertaken for the sake of the Holy Land, is viewed with favor by the Pope.

King Jerome is now merely a decorative ancient, only summoned to attend the Council on rare occasions. Governor of the Invalides, he is an invalid himself, mentally and physically. Napoleon grants all his demands, listens to his twicetold tales, and never consults him. Princess Mathilde, since her cousin's marriage, appears less often at the Tuileries. The Empress and she have in common no more than a vague jealousy buried beneath a parade of affability, yet often breaking out in acerb interchanges. Mathilde has formed a court of her own, liberal, gay, full of life, composed of writers and artists. She will be the feminine Mæcenas of the reign. She has chosen the Count de Nieuwerkerque for a lover. She forces him on the Ministry of Fine Arts, where this poor sculptor makes a good superintendent. Their liaison is generally accepted. Eugénie alone makes no allowance for it. . . . The Emperor has even found it necessary to reprove her in this connection:

"Let her live as she sees fit, poor Mathilde! I shall always be fond of her."

Prince Napoleon, Jerome's son and Mathilde's brother, is the pest of the imperial family. His powerful body is crowned by a Roman Cæsar's head. He is intelligent, restless, ambitious, and dangerous. But lately a Republican, he now poses as a Liberal, surrounds himself with enemies of the government, resuming—with more backbone—the attitude of the Orléans with regard to the legitimate monarchy. For the Emperor he is a constant care, an open wound. And still Napoleon III retains a liking for this domestic enemy; he cannot forget the years at Arenenberg, when he taught him his algebra. He divines his plans, and dreads his follies. Jerome Napoleon, "Plonpon," as he is known at Court, is his Lucien. Nevertheless, though Eugénie urges him to do so, he does not break with him. On occasion he even makes use of him.

His friends?

De Morny vexes him with his unimaginable imprudences, his smiling cynicism. Persigny, intransigent, domineering, is still overinclined to violence. Fleury, extremely adroit, is all too fond of playing the handsome soldier rake. Conneau, so the Emperor knows, stands ever behind him in the shadows. Kind, honest, faithful as he is, he devotes himself of his own accord to secondary tasks. The happy days are too dazzling for him. He will prove more useful in a day of misfortune.

Hortense Cornu, had she continued to come in touch with him, might have witnessed his thoughts, might have encouraged them. But she is still in the sulks with him. At long intervals, fearing he may wound her even more, he sends her some trifling gift, a book, some flowers, a

hamper of game. He writes her on her birthday. She sends him a few words in reply. And that is all. Her absence pains him. Yet what can he do? Time alone . . .

He returns to his table. A burdensome task awaits him: documents to be signed; requests for audiences to be passed upon; petitions; the provisional budget for 1856; the cost computations of the Universal Exposition, the first to be given in France, which has been so brilliantly successful, yet has resulted in a huge deficit; and, above all, the new plans to complete the transformation of Paris, submitted to him the day before by Baron Haussmann, Prefect of the Seine.

He opens the bulky portfolio, unfolds the plans, and becomes absorbed in them. There is nothing he finds more interesting. With blue, red, green, and yellow pencils he underlines or modifies the drawings. Paris is still a town of the Middle Ages. He will turn it inside out, demolish it, and rebuild it with straight avenues, with vast perspectives, stretching to the fortifications of 1840. He will make it the real capital of Europe. He is acting, in first instance, in obedience to a political idea. The narrow, tangled streets of mid-Paris could always be turned into a nest of barricades; they were the natural cradle of revolt. There should be broad, transverse streets, through which soldiers and cannon could circulate freely in case of need. It would put an end to riots. But now, his strategic preoccupation relieved, he forgets it. To aerate, sanitate, embellish, perfect the city, is the sole objective of Haussmann and the Emperor. In imitation of London, they wish to lay out immense parks, at Montsouris, at the Buttes-Chaumont, in the Monceau plain; to complete the Louvre, restore the Tuileries, build a mag-

nificent Opera House, bridges, halls, sewers; to put landscape gardeners to work in the woods of Boulogne and Vincennes. It will take years and hundreds of millions. But Napoleon is not yet an old man, and the money, despite gambling on the stock exchange (or, perhaps, because of it) is piling up in the Treasury. France is so rich!

With a blue pencil, he jots down in the street which is to connect Garnier's *Opéra* with the *Théâtre Français,* the name which, once bestowed, will bear witness to his work —so he thinks—through the centuries: *Avenue Napoléon III.*

The door opens. Rigged out in a grey overcoat, Mocquard's slender silhouette glides in. With a brisk step, in spite of his age, he almost runs up to the Emperor who, absorbed, does not raise his head.

His chief of cabinet coughs.

"You, Mocquard? What's the matter?"

He regards his old friend's simian countenance with astonishment. Ordinarily so discreet, Mocquard's little black eyes are sparkling; he is laughing:

"Sire, Marshal Vaillant is in my office. He has an urgent communication to make to Your Majesty."

"The Minister of War! Let him enter. But what is there to tell me? I received his report this morning. Ah, it must be news from the Crimea!"

"Yes, Sire, and it is glorious news. But I must find the Marshal. He makes it a point to inform you personally."

In spite of all his self-possession the Emperor rises and walks quickly out to find the Marshal.

Vaillant is a stout, red-faced man, sweating in his

capacious uniform. Catching sight of the Emperor, he cries, quite oblivious of etiquette:

"The Malakoff is ours!"

"Ah," said Napoleon, catching his breath. "Thank you, my dear Marshal. Sit down, if you please, and tell me all about it."

Vaillant strokes his bristly white hair with his hand.

"General Pélissier ordered the assault yesterday, September 8, at noon, after a three-days' bombardment. MacMahon led the storm. He carried the great Malakoff Bastion, whereas the English had to fall back from the Grand Redan, and our own divisions failed—Levailland against the Central Bastion and Dulac against the Little Redan. MacMahon maintained himself heroically in the redoubt he had taken. Seeing that further resistance was impossible, Gortschakoff fell back, after having sunk his fleet and blown up his arsenals. Here is Pélissier's dispatch, however. By this time Sebastopol must be ours."

"It means that the war is over," said Napoleon. "I am overjoyed! Marshal, telegraph my felicitations to General Pélissier at once, for himself and for our heroic army. Mocquard, see that the Marshal has pen and paper. I'll leave you for a moment, gentlemen; I must inform the Empress. Wait for me."

* * *

At Saint-Cloud, Eugénie was most often to be found in her room, situated at the extreme right wing of the château. It was an enormous apartment with five windows which afforded a vast outlook: the park, the Seine, and the agglomerate of Paris, where the new diggings showed as chalky lines against a background of black and grey. Marie-Louise had lived within these white walls,

set off with paintings in cameo. Marie-Antoinette had sat in these green silk chairs; the chests of drawers of Jacob's workmanship bore her cipher. It was said that Louis XVI himself had welded the door-locks. Eugénie took pleasure in these souvenirs; they attracted while they alarmed her.

When the Emperor entered, unannounced, she was writing at a roll-top desk over which the lovely Austrian queen had bent in her day. The Countess de Tascher, stretched out on a sofa, was reading. Pepa, dark and lean, formerly Mlle. de Montijo's maid, now in charge of her mistress's wardrobe, and high in favor, in spite of her rusticity and avarice, was kneeling before a drawer, putting away various gewgaws. A glance from the Emperor sent them both into the adjoining room.

Napoleon took Eugénie's hands in his own. She was still beautiful, hardly touched by the pregnancy which had slightly hollowed her cheeks. Her body was hidden in the ample folds of a plain organdy gown. She wore no jewels.

"Eugénie," said the Emperor (he pronounced it Ugénie), "the Crimean nightmare is about over. Sebastopol is taken. Now Russia will give in."

"Bravo!" she cried, clapping her hands. "That pig-headed Pélissier! I could kiss him!"

"Meanwhile, I'll kiss you."

He gave her a long, tender kiss. Then he led her to an armchair in which she sat down.

"Above all else, you must not tire yourself," he murmured.

He was always afraid that she might meet with an acci-

dent. Already, the preceding year, she had had a miscarriage. Fidgety, impetuous, she refused to make the slightest change in her habits, in spite of the doctor's advice.

"I'm doing very nicely," she said; "you need not be alarmed. I never have felt better. This morning, I thought I felt the child move. Doctor Conneau came at once. He examined me. He tells me that now all will be well."

Napoleon kissed her hand.

"I hope," he said, "that we have not paid too high for our victory. But as yet I have no details. I am waiting for a complete report from Pélissier. And, God be praised! so much suffering will not have been useless. Our poor soldiers will not have died in vain."

The trials undergone by the army during that long siege when, even more than shells and bullets, dysentery, typhoid, and cholera had caused the finest regiments of France to melt away, had often rent his soul.

"The brave fellows," he went on, "it is hard to say to what lengths their courage would not go. Fleury, the other day, told me a very touching little story. After Balaklava, two wounded soldiers—a Russian and a Frenchman—were left lying on the battlefield, unaided. Night fell and it was freezing. They talked without understanding each other. The Russian fainted. When he regained consciousness in the morning, he found himself covered with the Frenchman's coat. The latter was dead. Feeling his end approaching, he had pulled off his great-coat and spread it over his comrade. . . . What noble souls our people have, and how deserving they are of

every sacrifice we can make to secure their happiness!"

There were tears in his eyes.

Her head erect, she raised her beautifully arched eyebrows. She was touched, no doubt of it. Her lovely mouth was compressed. But her lapis-lazuli glance was clear; it did not soften. She never cried.

Orsini

Before retiring, the Emperor and Empress once more passed through the entire series of *salons*. Napoleon III, as a Venetian doge, wore a long purple robe which made him look taller. Eugénie had copied Mme. Vigée Le Brun's portrait of Marie Antoinette. In her gown of cherry-red velvet, trimmed with fur, a plumed toque on her powdered hair, adorned with the most beautiful among the crown jewels, she was a splendid apparition, a trifle exotic and melancholy, perhaps, yet surprisingly regal.

Leaving the Hall of the Marshals, where the orchestra, with muted strings, was playing *le Beau Dunois*, they passed into the Gallery of Peace. Lit by thousands of tapers, whose yellow light toned down faces, satins, and gold, the great chamber was irradiant with color. The imperial pair swept lightly along the brilliantly polished marquetry floor, exchanged a few words with prominent courtiers, with members of the diplomatic corps, and even joked with a few intimates. This first costume ball of the season was very gay. It had been suggested by Napoleon; he liked to disguise himself. But many were waiting for the departure of the sovereigns in order really to enjoy themselves.

Countess Walewski, blonde and very décolleté, a bow in her hand, proclaimed herself a Diana. Her bow embarrassed her. The Emperor signaled to a guest made up as a flute, some ten feet long, so tall he threatened to

break the chandeliers, and wound around with ribbons and devices:

"Monsieur de Gallifet," said Napoleon, "do relieve the Countess of her bow. She pierces too many hearts with it."

There was laughter. The Empress at first laughed together with the rest, then closed her lips. She was afraid the Emperor's remark might be considered an allusion. The Countess was not cruel. The Emperor himself could testify to the fact.

Eugénie turned to Princess Mathilde, who happened to be near her and spoke with her for a moment. The Emperor's cousin was a copy of Holbein's Anne of Cleves. Beside her stood the inevitable Nieuwerkerque, very handsome, as Francis I.

The imperial couple resumed its progress, passing through the Salon of the First Consul, and paused before a very merry group. Mme. de Persigny, as Flora, her straw-colored hair adorned with live roses, and the wife of the Belgian ambassador, Mme. Le Hon, another blonde beauty, charming and delicate, but on the wane, who were listening to the somewhat risqué stories told by a Bohemian and a gentleman of the age of Louis XIV—two of the Emperor's aids-de-camp—who suddenly fell silent. The Empress spoke for a moment with Mme. de Tascher, gowned as Catherine de Médicis. She pretended she did not see the statuesque Bianca Capella, Countess de Solms, a grand-daughter of Lucien Bonaparte, who led a life that challenged comment in circles inimical to the Empire, and who was asked to the Tuileries only now and again, and with regret.

The assembly, to tell the truth, was mixed and dispa-

rate. There were few great names. Functionaries, officers, financiers predominated. There were many strangers. The receptions at the Tuileries were the most cosmopolitan in Europe. The France of the *ancien régime,* in the dimly lit *salons* of the Faubourg Saint-Germain, resented this prodigal, upstart luxury, these amusements smacking of the rabble. The *real duchesses,* to the blazon born, picking up Mathilde's phrase, lisped:

"It will never be a Court."

Napoleon and Eugénie had reached the Grand Stairway down which they had to pass in order to reach their apartments. On each step two *Cent-Gardes,* in silver cuirasses, presented arms. A chamberlain placed a white satin mantle, ermine-lined, over the Empress's shoulders. They descended. On the lower steps a woman was coming up. She drew aside scarcely enough to allow the Empress to pass. Young, tall, svelte, wrapped in a white silk cloak on which danced countless hearts of crimson velvet, her magnificent bare shoulders and her long neck wound with pearls did not hold the eye. It shifted to the perfection of her haughty Olympian face. She had two large hazel eyes, an impeccable nose, a Cupid's bow mouth, a pale, delicate complexion.

"You are very late in arriving, Countess," said Napoleon.

"It is you who are leaving very early, Sire," replied Mme. de Castiglione, entirely self-possessed.

The Empress could not contain herself. Her features tensed with anger, she dropped the Emperor's arm.

"What impertinence!" she said, and continued on down the staircase, alone. The Emperor followed her, somewhat abashed.

The Countess de Castiglione, who thus dared proclaim herself the sovereign's "Queen of Hearts" in the very Tuileries, had for some months past been Napoleon III's acknowledged mistress. Descended from an ancient Florentine family, a relative of Cavour, she had been sent to France by the Piedmontese minister, to "seduce the Emperor," and to incline him to decide upon armed intervention in Italy. No sooner did she reach Paris than the capital talked only of her beauty, her elegance, often fantastic, her ruinous caprices. Received at Court, in spite of Eugénie's instinctive repugnance, she soon attracted the Emperor's attention. It was not difficult to attract. For all he was now nearly fifty, he continued to be subject to those gusts of sensuality which led him to engage in passing love-affairs, with great ladies or grisettes, displaying an eclecticism for which Doctor Conneau—who considered it dangerous—often reproached him.

"What would you have me do?" Napoleon would reply. "I feel that I must escape from myself. It does not amount to anything, and the Empress is wrong in feeling jealous. She imagines nothing but favorites, while they are merely passing fancies for me."

His imagination, his love of bodily adventure joined issue to interest him in a slender waist revealed at a reception, in a pretty face glimpsed in the *Bois* or at the theater, a pair of sightly legs mounting a carriage-step. Desire at once clamored within him, and it was rare when, after a little strategy, it was not gratified. In this connection the Emperor paid a good deal of attention to his secret police.

He courted this resplendent Italian patrician, in whose wake floated a vague exhalation of vice, and whom all

men followed like so many dogs. She did not offer much resistance. He presented her with jewels and with money as well, for she was at the same time lavish and miserly. Yet when she turned the conversation to politics, in the little house at Passy which he had fitted out for their meetings, he hardly listened to her. She had thought to play the part of a Pompadour; but she did not have the wherewithal. Without being stupid, she lacked finesse. Too infatuated with herself, she was no more than a feminine Narcissus, made for volupty, but ignorant of the art of holding love.

* * *

The astute Cavour had miscalculated. Napoleon had no need of the Castiglione's talks on Italian independence. He thought about it often enough.

His theory of individual *national entities,* the liberation of peoples enslaved by alien masters, could not be more brilliantly demonstrated than in Italy. Ten princes, the Pope, and Austria, divided among themselves a peninsula vibrant with indignation, where Carbonari *vente*—"sales," as their lodges were called—formed a hidden network, ready for revolt and war. Napoleon had not forgotten the insurrection of the Romans, nor the fact that he had promised himself, some day, to avenge his brother, slain by an Austrian bullet. At heart he was still a *Carbonaro.* To free Italy, to make of it, if not a single State, at least a land regenerated, less complex, contented and looking forward to a noble future—such was the Emperor's deepest wish, the essential task, outside the bounds of France, which, he felt, devolved upon his reign. And, were one to judge by appearances only,

it would have been, had he so wished, one easy to accomplish.

During that winter of 1857 he was, in fact, at the very summit of his power. The Congress of Paris, in liquidating the Crimean War, had restored to France the first place in Europe. All the sovereigns overwhelmed Napoleon with demonstrations of friendship and regard. The English alliance continued stable. Nevertheless, initiated by de Morny, dispatched to St. Petersburg as ambassador extraordinary, the reconciliation with Russia was completed. In Stuttgart, at the King of Wurtemberg's palace, a few months before, Napoleon had met the Czar. As Mocquard said, one might have thought oneself at Tilsit. The Emperor of the French loomed as Europe's Agamemnon.

Yet his movements were more circumscribed than people thought. If he freed northern Italy then, no matter how much consideration he wished to show the Pope, he might easily get into a row with the Holy See. And he needed the Roman clergy. The support of the Church had been of great value to the Empire in its first stages. Undoubtedly there had been misconceptions on the part of Rome. Pius IX, in spite of his agreements, had refused to come to Paris for the coronation, as Pius VII had for the First Napoleon in the past. As the price of such condescension on his part he demanded the abolition of the *Articles Organiques*. Napoleon III did not dare agree to this. In France itself the question of clerical patronage had already, on various occasions, become a grave issue. At the same time it was a serious matter to alienate the Catholics. And, besides, he walked in fear of domestic tempests. The Empress, though as yet she

still rarely intervened in politics, could not hear the possibility of a change in Italy mentioned without flying into a rage. Her Castilian piety was more apt to carry her away since the birth of the Prince Imperial, whose godfather the Pope had consented to become. The Pontiff had honored her with the gift of the Golden Rose, to which she attached an incalculable value. Over and over again she repeated that to enlarge Piedmont would be "the work of fools." She inclined toward a conservative alliance with Austria. She had a warm liking for its young Emperor Francis Joseph, who had adroitly shown his regard for her.

Above all, she dreaded an eventual break with the Vatican, and, who knows? a possible excommunication. Hence Eugénie had followed the Castiglione's intrigues, whose consequences she exaggerated, with considerable irritation. In spite of her frigid nature, she was extremely jealous, with a jealousy of pride, and the Emperor's gallantries, when they came to her notice, led to endless scenes and fits of sulking.

Napoleon was furthermore curbed with regard to his Italian dreams by a very serious consideration. The Crimean War had only just ended. It had nearly taken a turn for the worst. It had been very expensive. The liberation of Italy would necessitate a new expedition. Would not the Second Empire, whose dawn had been heralded with the promise of peace, turn into a mere succession of wars? No. It would be necessary to wait, to see what would happen. He held out hopes to Cavour; he turned an ungracious face to the Austrian ambassador. At the same time he reassured Eugénie. He had not come to a decision of any kind. He counted upon time,

chance, the unexpected, which affect individuals as they do states.

* * *

The Emperor and Empress had promised to attend the *Opéra* on Thursday, January 14, for the benefit performance of the baritone Massel, who was retiring. At half past eight, preceded by a squad of Lancers of the Guard, their carriage reaches the rue de Le Peletier. It slows up before the peristyle. At that moment three extremely powerful explosions ring out with hardly an intermission. The gas-lamps which illuminate the front of the Opera-house go out. The windows of the marquee and of the houses adjoining fall in with a tremendous clatter. There are cries, groans of anguish, the rattle of arms. Horses rear and plunge in the darkness. It is a moment of stark terror.

The imperial carriage, riddled with fragments of shell and projectiles, is half-tipped over upon the sidewalk. Torches blaze; people crowd around it. The coachman and the footmen are wounded. But the sovereigns are uninjured. Napoleon—there are holes in his hat, his nose is skinned—is the first to emerge, quite untroubled. He holds out his hand to Eugénie, who leaps to the ground, her white dress bespattered with blood. As they hasten to her she calls out, impatiently:

"Do not bother about us. This is our trade. Attend to the wounded."

The wounded number one hundred and fifty-six, of whom twelve will not survive.

Princess Mathilde appears in the door of her coupé, which was following the carriage. Bacciochi hurries up to help her down. She seems to hesitate.

"Bacciochi," says the Emperor, "let down the carriage-step. How do you expect her to get out?"

With surprising serenity he gives his orders; has the dead and wounded taken up. He wants to accompany the latter to the near-by pharmacy to which they are being carried.

A police commissary, Lanet, says to him:

"Sire, if the public, which has heard the bombs explode, does not see Your Majesty enter the *Opéra,* it will think the Emperor has been wounded. A mistake of the sort might have serious consequences as regards the preservation of order."

"You are right," replies Napoleon. "Come, I will return in a short time to hear how these unfortunate people are doing."

"Covered with blood?" Eugénie objects, pointing to her gown.

"Calm yourself," said the Emperor. "We are observed. Come."

He offers her his arm. Followed by Mathilde, they enter the imperial box. The house rises and cheers them. They bow. To Doctor Véron, director of the *Opéra,* who asks his commands, the Emperor says:

"Have the performance begin. And let nothing be changed."

* * *

Two hours later they are back again at the Tuileries, in the Empress's *salon.* The English ambassador, the President of the Senate, the ministers, Prince Napoleon, Prince Murat, de Morny, all those on a footing of intimacy in the Tuileries have hastened to put in an appearance. The Emperor, having courteously acknowledged their

felicitations, falls silent. He is preoccupied. The Empress, still wearing her cloak, and seated on a sofa, severely reproaches Pietri, the Prefect of Police.

"You attend to your duties in a very unsatisfactory way, sir! Have you forgotten that you are answerable to me for the Emperor's safety?"

Napoleon beckons Mocquard to his side.

"Have the portfolio containing the official report of the infernal machine trial of 1800 brought me. This is a similar affair," he says. "The repressive measures shall be the same. I want General Espinasse."

He reënters his study. Now, after having reflected, he is afraid. He imagines the worst. If he had been killed or seriously wounded, a revolution would have broken out in Paris, his throne would have been overturned. His wife, his child, might have undergone the same treatment meted out in the past to Marie Antoinette and the little Dauphin. The régime rests on him alone. The situation is a terrible one. His life is at the mercy of chance. This attempt was not the first. The day after the *Coup d'État* a conspiracy had been discovered in Marseilles. And then there had been the plot of the *Opéra-Comique*, which had miscarried; Pianori's pistol shots; and Tibaldi's attempt. The revolutionary groups would not disarm. Nothing seemed to discourage them. They must be broken. He would make the brutal Espinasse Minister of the Interior. The military commanders would be empowered to use stern measures to obtain security. Once again France was placed under martial law.

* * *

For several months a kind of armed terror was destined to rule. Nevertheless, the day after the explosion, the

Emperor learned that it could not be laid to the door of the Republican societies. The outrage which came so near striking him down was not a French outrage. Its instigator, as well as its principal executor, was an Italian agitator, Felice Orsini.

Since his childhood days Orsini had been conspiring for the liberation of Italy. He had made the acquaintance of Austrian prisons and plied the oar in papal galleys. Pardoned, he had become a member of the Roman Constituent Assembly in 1849. He had raised the Marches against the Austrians. Captured and imprisoned in Mantua, he had escaped from the citadel. He was a sincere, active, ardent, and honest soul, somewhat inclined to deceive, yet never petty. Taking refuge in London, he had there recruited some accomplices. He wished to assassinate the Emperor. He had put his hopes in him, had believed that his past would oblige him to become the champion of the Italian people. Napoleon had disappointed him. He had hunted down the Liberals and allied himself with the Conservatives and Clericals. He had become a hindrance. If he died, the returned Republic in France would establish the Republic beyond the Alps. Orsini manufactured his bombs, and, together with his accomplices, crossed the Channel to touch them off.

They were arrested a few hours after the crime had been committed. The imperial police were remarkably keen-sighted and had a long arm. Only one of the band escaped them, Francesco Crispi; later he was to become a statesman or, rather, pass for such.

Before the Assize Court Orsini's courageous, disinterested attitude led to a reversal of public opinion, at first

prejudiced against him. Besides, he was handsome. Jules Favre's dramatic plea made women weep. Orsini wrote a letter in which, refusing to humiliate himself in order to save his life, he adjured Napoleon to restore liberty to Italy.

The Emperor is deeply moved. The Empress, stirred to enthusiasm by so noble an attitude, begs him, on nine or ten different occasions, to pardon the three condemned men.

"He is no vulgar assassin, like Pianori," she says. "He is a proud, daring man. I esteem him. You cannot send Orsini to the guillotine. You cannot, you above all men. You will never have another chance like this to exercise clemency."

She wants to visit Orsini in prison. She hopes to reconcile him with the Church.

"You would be regarded as lacking in dignity. I forbid you to do so," says the Emperor, for once taking a decided stand.

The fine gesture of mercy greatly tempts him. He takes it up with his ministers. All of them, Fould, Walewski, Rouher, are opposed to it. The Emperor has escaped, but there were too many dead. The Empress insists. Napoleon next consults the members of his Privy Council. De Morny, Troplong, Baroche, Billault are in favor of execution. Even the Archbishop of Paris approves of it.

So be it. Justice shall be done. Orsini must die, covered with the black shroud of the parricide. Yet never will a political crime have had such consequences. For out of its sacrifice the new Italy shall be born.

* * *

Several months passed. France, which Espinasse's brutal fist had clutched by the throat, uttered not a sound. There were internments and deportations. In London and in Turin Napoleon's ambassadors insisted on laws which would prevent future conspiracies. Persigny, with his arrogant ineptitudes, compelled Palmerston to withdraw. And this compromised the English alliance.

Would the Emperor, would the Empire achieve security in consequence of these rigors? State crimes are results. In order to avoid them one must go back to their causes. So long as Italy remained enslaved, Orsini might find emulators and avengers. Police protection would be vain. Napoleon was greatly troubled. He was not afraid on his own account. But his nearest . . . Eugénie no longer slept. In imagination she saw her husband slain, the Tuileries invaded, insurrection triumph. . . . Could these disasters be charmed away by trans-Alpine intervention? Yet what of the Pope? She underwent a severe struggle between her terror and her faith. What did the Emperor have in mind? He only discussed trifling matters with her.

The ministers could tell her nothing. Napoleon no longer seemed to think of the Italian question.

He thought of nothing else.

* * *

One evening he sent for Conneau, and, in Mocquard's presence, said to him:

"Henri, is there anything that keeps you in Paris for the moment?"

"No, Sire."

"Then I've a mission for you. Here is a confidential letter for the Count de Cavour. You must deliver it to

him in Turin, without any one's suspecting the object of your trip. Do not let a soul know. Be on your guard against the Empress, in particular. This is not official diplomacy. It is my own personal secret. I am inviting Cavour to visit me privately at Plombières, when I go there to take the waters. I have to talk to him."

"I will leave tomorrow," said the Doctor, flushing with pleasure.

Like Mocquard, he was an out-and-out partisan of intervention. So was Hortense Cornu. She had become reconciled with the Emperor when the Prince Imperial was born. Without giving up a single one of her ideas, she came to see Napoleon as in the past, in the morning, when he was alone.

They would talk for hours, though they seldom agreed. Yet their friendship rose superior to these discords. She detested the superannuated and despotic Austrian monarchy, and ardently pleaded the cause of the Italian patriots. In her eyes, as in those of all European liberals, Napoleon III could atone for the Second of December only by liberating Italy.

He heard her in silence, without committing himself.

"You will let the hour go by, Louis," she would exclaim.

"Have patience a while longer," he would murmur.

Conneau did not give such a free rein to his opinions, yet all his sentiment, all his memories harked back to Italy. He, too, had not forgotten Forli. In their every private interview, Princess Mathilde, because she loved sonorous phrases, and Prince Napoleon, eager at last to play an important part, supported the ideas advanced by their imperial cousin's old and humble friends. Napoleon

at times gave them reason to hope, at others discouraged them. His real intentions remained an enigma for all.

"Yes, tomorrow," he said to Conneau. "If you should see the King, tell him nothing of moment. Cavour is the only statesman in all Europe who understands me. And return at once; I miss you when you are not about."

These words amply repaid the friend who never had cared to accept anything from him.

* * *

Napoleon III had considered the problem from every angle. And now he had reached a decision. He did not go beyond a compromise. Driving the Austrians from Milan and Venice, he would restore, on behalf of the House of Savoy, that kingdom of the Lombards whose crown had been worn by Napoleon I. The Pope would retain the major portion of his patrimony, and would even be honored with the presidency of the Italian Confederation. The Bourbons would be allowed to remain in Naples, in order not to lose the friendship of Russia, their protector. Yet they should be compelled to reform their atrocious and farcical government. In return for its vast aggrandizement, Piedmont would cede Nice and Savoy, which would constitute the Empire's dowry to France. Prince Napoleon should marry Princess Clotilde, Victor-Emmanuel's daughter, to cement the union of both dynasties by a family alliance.

England, willy-nilly, would have to let him do as he liked. Prussia could only champ the bit. It would suffice to find a pretext to go to war and make Austria seem to be in the wrong.

In this way Napoleon thought he could reconcile all things: his past as a conspirator, his political doctrines,

the security of his throne, the interests of France, the consideration due the Catholic Church, and Eugénie. Yet all these things were irreconcilable. He was no longer an agitator, but a sovereign. France would be the stronger with only a sprinkling of peoples on her frontiers. The Italian Liberals would not be satisfied with partial concessions. The Pope would never give up a scintilla of his authority for the sake of an empty title. The French Catholics would not resign themselves. The Empress would be indignant. And Europe, her jealousy aroused, would be on the lookout for the first reverse.

Yet the Emperor regarded as chimerical all that ran counter to his chimeras. Destiny had so often served him that he imagined she could not betray him. Men do not greatly change. Napoleon was still the patient, gentle dreamer of his adolescence. His fecund imagination made him see an easy, brief, glorious expedition, after which he need only continue to reign undisturbed, developing the material and moral happiness of France, and assuring the future of his son. There should be a splendor equal to that of the First Empire, with greater stability, more of true grandeur. There should be neither a Waterloo nor a Saint Helena.

* * *

July. An unpretentious hotel drawing-room at Plombières. The Emperor sits near a round table with a red cover, whose fringes he twists and untwists. His aid-de-camp, General de Béville, opens the door and ushers in a short, fat, spectacled man, his features framed with a collar of greying hair.

"M. Giuseppe Benso, Sire, at Your Majesty's orders."

This name is the disguise of Cavour, Victor Emman-

uel's headstrong, subtle minister, who plans to make his master king of a united Italy stretching from the Alps to the Adriatic and Calabria.

Napoleon rises, holds out his hand.

"Thank you, my dear Count, for having complied with my request. We have work to do together for the mutual benefit of our countries."

Béville has vanished. Cavour, quivering with anxiety, bows his great forehead. The Emperor smiles.

"In consideration of certain conditions which we will discuss, I am disposed to march with you against the Austrians . . ."

Solferino

The Emperor Francis Joseph was here only two hours ago, with an escort of Tyrolian sharpshooters," General Fleury remarked to Napoleon. "He rode off in a great hurry as our *voltigeurs* entered Cavriana. A little more and they'd have captured him. It's a pity. We had it all planned."

The Emperor continued silent. With Fleury's aid he dismounted. They found themselves standing on a small, terraced square, bordered with giant mulberry-trees, whence they could divine a vast expanse of country outstretched before them. There was a little daylight left. It had been raining, but the air was still heavy with storm. In the sky, behind the village of Cavriana, rose the crumbling battlements of an old Ghibelline fortress. Half a league beyond, in a plain broken by olive-groves and vineyards, at regular intervals, the campfires of the French army flamed redly.

Followed by Marshal Vaillant and Prince Napoleon, the Emperor entered a one-story house, whose white-washed walls were festooned with onions and maize, hung there to dry. It was empty. The indwellers had fled. Napoleon sat down on a bench, in front of a rickety table. At a gesture from him the others did the same. Fleury lit a lantern, and then went off to give his orders to the escort, whose horses were pawing the ground outside.

In this twilight of victory the Emperor seemed overwhelmed. In order to ascend to Cavriana, he had just traversed a portion of the battlefield. The roads, the gullies, the fields, the streams were piled high with corpses, most of them already stripped, and with dying men who still stirred. There were faces already black, swollen, negroid. Some, their mouths wide open, bared their teeth in a horrible grin. Flies buzzed about them in swarms.

"This is horrible," said Napoleon. "These groans torment me. How is it that these wounded men have not been cared for as yet?"

"We pushed on at full speed," said Fleury; "the medical service doesn't know which way to turn."

"It was just like this before, at Magenta," said the Emperor, sadly.

He was very pale; he clenched his teeth. As they passed by a field-hospital he insisted on entering it, in spite of the remonstrances of his Grand Equerry. A slaughter-house smell came from the barn in which, on hapchance tables, amid cries and groans of agony, surgeons dripping blood were cutting into live flesh, carelessly flinging, now here, now there, fragments of legs and arms.

The Emperor advanced a few steps, *képi* in hand.

"Don't lose heart, boys," he said in a stifled voice.

Tears fell on his great moustachios.

"Glory comes high," he murmured.

He said not another word. He stepped out, half-fainting, bathed in sweat; remounted with difficulty, and kept his eyes closed until they reached Cavriana.

Fleury reëntered after having posted sentinels. He seated himself in turn.

"My dear Marshal," said the Emperor, who was gradually recovering, "is there any recent news from General Douay? Will it be possible to save him?"

"He has been severely wounded, but the prospects seem good," said Vaillant. "As for poor Auger, he is dead."

"I was very fond of him," said the Emperor. "Marshal, his widow and children must be cared for. I rely on your goodness of heart."

"Our losses are depressing," said Prince Napoleon, "but at least they have given us a magnificent victory. If we could pursue the enemy without giving him a chance to recover, we would be masters of all Venetia."

"I am afraid," said the Marshal, "that we will have to mark time for a bit before exploiting our success. The soldiers are tired out and our ammunition is exhausted."

"Has the General Staff foreseen nothing at all?" cried the Prince, striking the table with his fist. "If we halt now the Austrians will entrench themselves in the Quadrilateral, and we'll have a siege campaign on our hands that will last for months."

"Monseigneur," said the old soldier, somewhat stiffly, "all have done their best, from the General Staff down to the last zouave. But we have to deal with a fiery enemy, well commanded, and nearer his base than we are. This is no military promenade we have undertaken. And, incidentally, I told His Majesty so in advance."

"That is true," answered the Emperor, "but nevertheless, we have encountered difficulties which many of us,

myself included, I must admit, did not expect. Perhaps we were not sufficiently prepared . . ."

He stopped in order not to appear to be reproaching Marshal Vaillant who, as Minister of War, had had charge of the equipment of the army. From the beginning of the campaign there had been a deficiency of horses, stores, and ammunition. The courage and high spirits of the soldiers had been worthy of the great wars of the Revolution. But their leaders were revealed as mediocre and at variance with each other. There had been some great feats of arms. MacMahon, through his daring initiative, had won the battle already seriously compromised at Magenta, where old Baraguay d'Hilliers, maimed at Leipsic, had rushed to the assault of Solferino like some fledgling lieutenant. Yet that same day the dissensions of Canrobert and of Niel had saved the Austrians from total rout. Douay, Wimpfen, and Vinoy had been guilty of serious errors. As for the Piedmontese, they had fought well; yet, too tardily obedient to orders, Victor Emmanuel had received several reprimands from the Emperor.

How poorly, on this occasion, the latter, who in every case tried to parallel the course of the first Napoleon, had imitated his model. How different was this campaign from the two fulminant campaigns of General Bonaparte and the First Consul! Ah, Lodi, Arcola, Rivoli, Marengo, instant and perfect victories, how indecisive seemed Magenta, how lacking in brilliance Solferino, compared with you! These last had been hard-fought actions; indecisive, in any event, incomplete.

But the uncle, though still a youth, had been a consummate general, who foresaw all, took advantage of all,

was able to meet every emergency. The nephew did not even have a plan of campaign. He had, notwithstanding, imposed himself as generalissimo. Not having been able to go to the Crimea, he counted upon the Italian War to supply him with a chance to win glory in person. For is one truly a Cæsar unless one is an Imperator?

Invested with the supreme command, he had shown himself incapable of exercising it. He lacked that clear-sighted vision, that promptitude of decision, that sheer authority which constitute a leader's initiative. An amateur, he wavered between conflicting counsels, lost himself in details, and, weighed down by too crushing a responsibility, inwardly bled in sympathy with every wound inflicted in battle. Surrounded by enthusiastic respect at the beginning, the generals now accorded him only the deference due the sovereign dispenser of rank and favor. This he felt, since his intuition, even when it seemed to be sleeping, was never at a loss. He realized that in the eyes of History he would always be merely a sovereign, and never a soldier. And this made him suffer in his pride; it alarmed him in his prevision of the future. The French followed the crests whose plumes pointed the road to glory. Too fortunate a general would eclipse the Emperor. Thus war spelled for his dynasty a risk which he had not considered.

"Couldn't we," asked Prince Napoleon, "assembling the divisions which have suffered least, push forward suddenly on Verona? I will undertake to carry out the operation if it is entrusted to me."

He was impatiently eager to play an active part. Hitherto he had been held down to the command of a reserve corps.

"It is out of the question to think of capturing Verona by a surprise attack," said Fleury. "The place is too strong. Your Imperial Highness would be merely inviting a repulse."

"Besides, all the troops are in need of rest; they are knocked out with fatigue," added the Marshal.

"Yes, yes, let them get some rest," said the Emperor. "They surely deserve it. This is no time further to expose them."

And slowly, without venturing to look at his cousin, he added:

"I intend to propose an armistice to the Emperor of Austria."

Prince Napoleon leaped up:

"What's that? An armistice? It is always the vanquished who asks for it, and, unless I'm out of my mind, we are the victors!"

"As a matter of fact, we are the victors," said Napoleon. "Though as you have heard, we still have the hardest part of the campaign before us. The prospect of passing a few more months in Italy would not frighten me if only I had elbow-room. But I have just had news from Paris—alarming news. Prussia is mobilizing an army on the Rhine. What I now fear is, that if the war be prolonged, I may be attacked from the rear."

"Your news comes from the Empress? She exaggerates, no doubt of it. She is inclined to go to extremes."

The Emperor's face reflected his dissatisfaction. His cousin's animosity where Eugénie was concerned had never abated. But the moment was too grave to lend itself to wrangling. He replied:

"How is it, since you are unaware of the source from which this information is derived, that you pretend to say the Empress exaggerates? She had her information from the Czar, who sent his aid-de-camp Schouvaloff to her. And Walewski has sent me the identical report from an English source. Prussia is mobilizing in secret. Three hundred thousand men will have been concentrated around Mayence in the course of the next two weeks. We've not three whole divisions to oppose them, and even they are made up entirely of conscripts. Paris is exposed. So the Empress insists that I treat with Austria as soon as possible. If Francis Joseph proves reasonable, we can secure excellent conditions, conditions we might not so easily secure again. For in any campaign, the eventuality of a reverse must always be admitted."

"And what do you call excellent conditions?"

The question was impudent; it was embarrassing. Jerome's son took pleasure in these brusque outbreaks which he did not modify even when addressing the Emperor. The latter, though often vexed by his disparaging and fault-finding spirit, nevertheless overlooked many of his sallies. He had given him a rich appanage, had arranged a great marriage for him. He had even thought of providing him with a sovereign establishment in Italy or in Poland.

The Emperor, after a moment of silence, said:

"My conditions are as follows—I must ask, gentlemen, that you regard this as said in confidence—Austria shall give up Lombardy, which she must cede to King Victor Emmanuel."

"And Venetia?"

"Austria shall keep Venetia on condition that she enter the Italian Confederation."

"It gives the lie to all your promises! It disowns them in the most scandalous way! When you left the Tuileries you wrote with your own hand: *The object of this war is to restore Italy to herself.* And after gaining two victories, you steal away, you offer the enemy your hand. Do you know what all Europe will say? That you're afraid!"

"Wouldn't it be possible," said the dismayed Fleury, "to try to obtain Venice?"

"The Emperor Francis Joseph would not give it up now. We would have to take Venice and Verona in order to get them. And we haven't the time."

"If it was merely to end it today," said the Prince, "we never should have begun this war. There is no sense to it. Suppose the Emperor Francis accepts your overtures, as is quite probable, you will only conclude a lame, humiliating peace, which cuts you off from your allies and destroys French prestige."

"The peace will be neither lame nor yet humiliating. It will be one of moderation. After a bold and successful campaign it offers us, on the contrary, a chance to gain the good will of Europe. For some months past it has no longer been ours. And I am uneasy about it. If I appealed to England at this moment, then, in spite of the personal friendship existing between Queen Victoria and myself, she would refuse to mediate. Prussia hopes to march against us. As for Russia, her good will takes the shape of a warning. She would not go so far to help us."

"Europe will respect you only if you show yourself

decisive and energetic. It will make her more venturesome with regard to us if you stop now. There is an evident intention to intimidate you. Do not yield to a menace whose true significance the Regent and Walewski —chronic alarmists—have exaggerated. Prussia may be massing troops. But they will not cross the Rhine. Pressure can be brought to bear on her through the Czar. Carry on the war against Austria with vigor. Let the Quadrilateral go, and let an army corps landed in Dalmatia march on Venice. At the same time see that the revolution is unchained in Hungary. Kossuth is here, as you know. He guarantees to raise Budapest whenever you give the sign. Instead of betraying your principle of nationality, apply it boldly, accepting all the consequences. If you really become the liberator of the nations, the kings will bow before you."

The Prince, who had risen, walked up and down with great strides. He had spoken warmly and urgently. He was by nature a tribune. In discussion his fleshy, olive-yellow features took on a leonine cast. His head flung back, he impressed his auditors with the hard firmness conveyed by his black eyes, beneath the arching brow so like that of the chief of his race. Though the son of a German woman, he was all Corsican and Bonaparte. He continually repeated the same gesture, vividly flinging his hand from left to right as though sweeping away men or ideas. For, more than the Emperor, he seemed born to command, to rule. No doubt he would have made a great prince had fate so chosen. . . . He was a power going to waste.

"Kossuth, yes, I have seen him," said the Emperor. "He would foment an insurrection. But I do not wish

to set all Europe ablaze. Who knows—the conflagration might be blown back upon us. Besides, it would be unfair to fight Francis Joseph with such arms. He is an amiable, chivalrous young man with whom one can come to an understanding. A powerful Austria is necessary for the proper balance of the Continent. And our two dynasties, once peace has been concluded, can support each other against Germany, Prussia in particular."

"I seem to hear the Empress speaking," said Prince Napoleon, ironically.

"And I," replied the Emperor, "hear King Victor Emmanuel's son-in-law, but I do not hear the French prince."

"You have pushed Piedmont into this adventure and now you abandon her."

"I do not abandon her. I shall treat for her as for myself. She shall have a handsome share. The annexation of Lombardy will turn her into a great state with boundless aspirations. I do not pretend to establish her limits for all time. She, too, shall gain the promise of a future."

"The King will not accept your peace. He will prefer to abdicate. And Cavour . . ."

"They can be persuaded."

"You mean, they can be compelled."

"No, no. Victor Emmanuel, in spite of his surface swagger, does not lack finesse. And Cavour's is a superior intelligence. They will realize the necessities of my position. Besides, in enlarging herself too swiftly and disproportionably, Piedmont will be building upon the sand. She will fare better advancing step by step. This will be her first. Later we shall see what comes next."

"Cavour will resign."

"Very well, let him resign. Ratazzi is ready to take his place this minute. He will be more tractable."

"Italy, whose hero you have been, will not forgive you."

"I am already practically assured of her ingratitude. In any case, the Empress is right; we shall not let France be invaded to gratify the immoderate ambition of the Italian people."

"It was you who excited that ambition. Time after time you have repeated: 'I shall free Italy to the Adriatic shore.'"

Wearily Napoleon crossed his arms.

"Since you will have it so, I have been wrong. I did not make enough allowance for the unexpected. Yet because I have deceived myself—or have been deceived—I shall not persist in my error at the risk of losing all. Your marriage, I realize, attaches you to the Italian interests. As for myself, I must first consider the interests of France."

Embarrassed, Marshal Vaillant and General Fleury did not speak, only nodding their heads at times to approve of what the Emperor was saying. Neither of them liked the Prince. They were aware of the weak points of the army and the high command, and, estimating the Prussian menace at its true worth, had also come to wish for peace.

"What is to be done with the populations of central Italy which have revolted against their princes? Are you going to reimpose their archdukes on Parma and Tuscany?"

"They shall not return until they have given their subjects liberal constitutions. The Holy Father himself will

be asked to inaugurate serious reforms in his states by Francis Joseph and by me."

"They will make promises which they will not keep. The patriots will be shot and hung, as before. The Pope, once over his fear, will want to reign, as in the past."

"I feel sure that Pius IX will agree to my demands. He is not so intransigent as he is supposed to be."

"You rely on the good will, the good faith of the Holy See! Don't you know priests?"

"I realize that you detest them. And this hatred biases your opinions."

Forgetting himself, the Prince dared say:

"Why, you, who never have believed in anything, will end by becoming a saint!"

"You are mistaken, Napoleon," said the Emperor, icily, "I always have believed in a God. If He had not protected me I should not be where I now am. Nor you, either, for that matter. . . . But we must not lose time. This discussion is futile. . . . Before communicating with the Emperor of Austria, I shall inform King Victor Emmanuel. Not Cavour. Only the King, at his headquarters. I shall inform, not consult him. In two days, Fleury, you will leave for Verona, as the bearer of my proposal for a suspension of hostilities. The agreement with the Emperor Francis should be concluded without delay. We can allow ourselves more leisure with regard to the final peace. At the moment the thing in question is to surprise Europe and intimidate Germany."

He refastened the collar of his uniform, which he had unbuttoned.

"It is only ten o'clock. We'll ride to headquarters, at the end of the village. Marshal, you have given the

order, haven't you, that all recommendations for advances in rank and crosses be prepared for me? I will sign them. I want our brave fellows to be happy when they wake up tomorrow."

* * *

Five weeks later, on August 14, the entire Court was grouped about the Empress in the Place Vendôme, on a vast stand abutting upon the Palace of Justice, and covered with a dais of red velvet fringed with gold. The heat was suffocating. In the crowd, held in place by municipal guards, so as to leave a large open space on the right of the Column, all heads were turned toward the rue de la Paix. From it rose a confused medley of sound, a kind of tremendous murmur of joy, traversed by trumpet-calls sounding in the distance.

The Emperor, sitting his horse in front of the Column, gave Fleury, stationed a few feet in his rear, a sign. The Grand Equerry dismounted and ascended the tribunal in search of the little Prince Imperial, whom he took up in his arms, and returning, held up to the Emperor. Napoleon kissed the boy on both cheeks, and seated him on the pommel of his saddle.

A prodigious burst of acclamation spread in extended waves.

Vive l'Empereur! Vive le Prince Impérial!

The little chap looked about him, smiling and very pale. He wore—only three years old—the blue and red uniform of the Grenadiers of the Guard. He had his mother's blond hair and blue eyes, but the Emperor's kindly mouth. He was charming.

Napoleon III, one hand on his son's shoulder, maintained his motionless, serious attitude. With his head

slightly inclined to the right, bronzed by the Italian sun, he seemed to be savoring the gladness of this Paris, where, for this one day, none bore the Empire a grudge.

A fanfare of trumpets, closer by, pierced the hubbub of the crowd. The soldiers were coming up the rue de la Paix. Almost at once there was an astonishing silence. Emotion tensed every face.

Marching in slow time, in broad column formation, and preceded by their officers, appeared the *Voltigeurs* of the Guard, greeted with outcries and frenetic applause. From every window flowers rained down upon them. Their powder-grimed flags, slashed and cut by bullets, lowered their eagles before the Emperor, who saluted them with his sword. The little Prince clapped his hands as the regiments went by. The crowd called the leaders by name.

"Canrobert! Canrobert!"

The Marshal gestured with his saber. In an instant he was covered with a deluge of flowers. He passed. After him came artillery. On the old cobblestones of royal Paris the short-barreled field-pieces bumped along with a fracas which nearly drowned the cries of the crowd:

"MacMahon!"

Over the neck of his grey charger the hero of Magenta, simple and unpretentious, bowed before the Emperor. The Prince Imperial sent him a kiss. The Marshal, smiling, saluted a second time.

"Here come the Zouaves! Long live the Zouaves!"

All that was left them for a standard was a colorless rag, on which crosses were gleaming. They had kept their old campaign uniforms, their patched, dirty cloth

breeches, their worn vests. Their faces were bronzed, their eyes bright, their heads held high. They were filled with pride. It was to them that France owed Solferino, victory and peace. For two hours they had been marching amid that frenzy of enthusiasm of which only Paris is capable. Their ranks were thinned; they had left open the places of their dead. All the women in the imperial tribunal had risen and were waving their hands. The Empress, very pale, was trembling. The Emperor chewed his moustache. His son, in his little choked voice, called out:

"Long live the Zouaves!"

At the risk of falling, since he had no flowers he took off his cordon of the Legion of Honor and flung it to the soldiers. It passed from hand to hand, and the colonel fastened it to the flag.

Such a moment paid for all, effaced all. Mistakes, fears, and perils, all were forgotten. France was irradiant in new bloom. The Empire seemed immovably established for all time. From the Corsican towering on his Column to the fair-haired child cheered by an enraptured people in the sunlight, there seemed to descend a certitude of grandeur.

Nevertheless, happy, but clear-sighted, the Emperor, holding his son in both hands, fervently promised himself:

"For the little one's sake, no more wars; never another war."

Sodom and Gomorrah

Seven o'clock. In the Card Gallery the guests at the Château are awaiting the Emperor and Empress. It is one of the last *soirées* at Compiègne, the smallest, numerically, of the season (there are hardly sixty people present), yet the most outstanding, perhaps, in view of the caliber of the guests invited. The men, in nearly every case, wear blue or black frockcoats, knee-breeches, and black silk stockings. The women are in evening dress, vivid in color, with enormous crinolines, loaded with bows, silk loops or wreaths of artificial flowers, a fashion introduced by Eugénie. The décolletage is extreme, with many jewels, a trifle too many. There is Prince Napoleon, who has put on flesh and is turning from a Cæsar into a Vitellius, with his wife Clotilde of Savoy, wan and frumpishly dressed, a nun rather than a *grande dame*. There are present as well Princess Mathilde, still beautiful, but heavier; Count Bacciochi, Eliza Bonaparte's grandson, whom the Emperor has appointed First Chamberlain, and whom he uses in all sorts of affairs; Prince Richard Metternich, the Austrian ambassador, and his wife, an intimate friend of the Empress; General de la Goncha, the Spanish ambassador; the Chevalier Nigra, the Italian minister; Count von Bismarck, the Prussian minister; the Duke and Duchess de Morny, the Count and Countess Walewski; the Count and Countess de Persigny; M. Baroche, M. Rouher,

Baron Haussmann, Baroness Adolphe de Rothschild; Colonel de Gallifet and his wife, the Marquise; the Viscount Aguado, Viscount de l'Aigle, M. Péreire, Marshal Vaillant, and Lord and Lady Winchelsea.

Artists and authors are also represented, for the most part invited by the Empress. First of all, there is her old friend Mérimée, still on a most intimate footing with her, and who comes to any Court function he may feel inclined to attend. There are Alfred de Vigny, Sainte-Beuve, Octave Feuillet; young Sardou, a guest at Compiègne for the first time, on "the occasion of the performance of his *Pattes de Mouche* in the theater of the Château"; the sculptor Carpeaux, the painter Hippolyte Flandrin; Gounod, the composer, the architect Viollet-le-Duc. And there are present, as a matter of course, the incumbents of court charges and members of the sovereigns' personal entourage: Anna Murat, Duchess de Mouchy; Fleury, Master of the Horse; Mocquard, Doctor Conneau, the Count de Nieuwerkerque, Superintendent of Fine Arts; and Mlle. Bouvet, the Baroness de Pierres, the Marquise de las Marismas, the Countess de la Bédoyère, and Mme. de Lourmal, the Empress's ladies-in-waiting.

Amid these walls tapestried with forest scenes, the conversation flows along without effort, in a light current of chit-chat, now and again interrupted by laughter. Only the women sit. The men stand about in groups, according to their connections, their origin, or their interests. Walewski, with lowering brow, very important, confers with the insinuating Nigra, Cavour's erstwhile secretary and inheritor of his plans. The Count von Bismarck, tall, heavy, red-faced, his eyes, as hard as granite,

shaded by enormous black eyebrows, but entirely at his ease and smiling shrewdly, is trying to gain the good graces of Princess Metternich. The Princess does not like him. She hates Prussia. Yet she shows herself quite amiable to him. King William has just recalled him to Berlin to preside over his Privy Council. Hence Count von Bismarck is rising to a level where, for all he be an adversary, he must be treated with consideration.

"You've not visited the Château as yet, have you, my dear Count? And you are going to share our dissipations? Do you know what the 'Reds,' the Socialists, call Compiègne?"

"No, on my word. Tell me, I beg of you."

"Sodom and Gomorrah. Doesn't that alarm you?"

"Ah," said he, laughing, "I am not such a Puritan as you imagine. And this court is like every other court, save that it is more amiable. I am very sorry to have to go, Your Highness; I have enjoyed myself so well here in France."

"You will return, my dear Count?"

Pauline Metternich throws back her impudent pug-nose. Her rose-colored gown with its lace flounces makes her complexion seem darker than it is. She is very homely, very lean, and provocatively rouged. On her flat headband glitters a magnificent tiara.

"I very much hope so," replies Bismarck, "but can one ever tell?"

Near the red marble chimney-piece, M. de Viel-Castel was telling raw stories to a group of men. The women were discussing the hunting party of the afternoon past, the newest fashions and the latest Paris news—the redoubt given by Arsène Houssaye in his new mansion on

the avenue Friedland; the most recent concert at St. Eustache, by the Abbé Liszt, who, after having so liberally given himself to women, was now giving himself to God; Thérèse, the *café-concert* singer, so comical in her "Little Léon," and "Nothing's sacred to a Sapper"; Mme. de Solms, compelled to go into exile in consequence of a new scandal. Politics were not broached, yet curious glances were cast at de Morny and Persigny who, after having been for two days past on a very frigid footing with each other, were now engaged in a lively conversation at the extremity of the Gallery.

The Emperor had elevated de Morny to the dukedom a few weeks before. Now entirely bald, his livid face set off by his dyed moustache, he was still erect, sprightly, elegant, and youthful. But his eyes shone with a feverish luster. He tried to hide a slight tremor of the hands. Ill, his heart worn out, he abused the stimulant whiplash of arsenic in order to continue his life of pleasure.

Leaning nonchalantly against a console, he was talking politics with his old rival Persigny, who had exchanged the London embassy for the Ministry of the Interior. He was giving him prudential advice which Persigny, like some cross-grained bulldog, heard with impatience and without any intention of following. There was to be a general election during the year to come. Preparations should be made for it. De Morny was advising an active though discreet propaganda. Persigny insisted upon "the iron hand."

"You will find that you've miscalculated," de Morny concluded. "France resents too heavy a hand on the bit."

Supple by nature, informed by experience, he was more

and more inclined to temper authority, to lend the Empire a constitutional aspect. President of the Legislative Body, he treated the Opposition Party, numerically small, yet illustrated by such talents as Émile Ollivier, Ernest Picard, and Jules Favre, with an indulgence and a respect for which the ultra-Bonapartists reproached him. He advised the Emperor, little by little, to orient his government in the direction of liberty, and to draw to his side those among the Republicans who, like Ollivier, were still capable of evolution. "Martial law is a one-time measure," he was fond of saying. Yet this perspicacious and clear-sighted spirit clashed with the opposing wills of the Empress and Persigny, who, though themselves at swords' points, in any event were agreed as regarded the maintenance of the authoritative principle.

They held that the Emperor had given sufficient proof of his liberalism by conceding a general amnesty to all political offenders on his return from the Italian campaign. The proscribed of the Second of December had seen the barred frontiers opened to them. The government had noticeably relaxed its severity. The oppressive measures for the safeguarding of public security, applied with military sternness by General Espinasse, had been rescinded. The Legislative Body had been accorded the right of discussion and the publication of its debates. The press had recovered some measure of independence. Public opinion appeared to be confident and contented. An astonishing prosperity seemed to appease all appetites. In this autumn of 1862, Napoleon and Eugénie, returning to Compiègne after a tour of the departments of the Centre, could feel no doubt with regard to the extreme popularity they enjoyed.

De Morny and Persigny changed the subject as Rouher approached them. He was their common enemy. De Morny had made the man, had raised him to power. In return Rouher—in connection with the dangerous demands of the Countess Le Hon—had done him every ill turn with the Emperor a pettifogger's greed could devise. For the beautiful ambassadress, mistress and associate of de Morny in so many more or less dubious enterprises, when her lover had married the young Russian Princess Troubetzkoi, though love was lost to her, wished at least to save her money, and obtain possession of the property to which she was entitled. The Emperor had intervened to avoid a disgusting scandal, and, by advancing a few million from his privy purse, had hushed up the shameful quarrel.

De Morny had continued to observe all outward forms, but had never forgiven Rouher. Persigny, whose own power was on the wane, angrily watched the growing influence of this crafty Auvergnat, who pleased their master by his rare faculty for hard work and his outward flexibility. Minister of State, he had become the sovereign's mouthpiece in addressing parliament. Little by little, he was on the way to be Prime Minister. People were beginning to call him the "vice-emperor."

The two wings of the door fly open. There is a general silence. According to the obligatory evening protocol, the guests at the Château range themselves in two files, the length of the Gallery. The Empress enters, followed by her Mistress of the Wardrobe, the Princess d'Esslingen, and her Reader, the Countess de Wagner. In response to the long obeisance of the women and the ceremonious bows of the men, she sinks into a most ex-

quisitely correct curtsy, and, slowly, moving within the great bell of her lavender silk gown, embroidered with small flowers, with only a double string of pearls about her magnificent shoulders, she passes smiling down the row of faces. Then, after a few kindly words to those whom she knows least, especially strangers, she moves toward the friends of her own particular circle, Princess Metternich, Anne Murat, the Duchess de Malakoff. Little by little, the groups are reëstablished, but the sound of voices is lowered to a murmur.

The Emperor appears in turn, talking to his old friend, Hortense Cornu. For the past two hours they have been discussing politics in his study; who knows, they may also have spoken of the past which forms so strong a bond of union between them, of Arenenberg, of the charming Queen. A long time has elapsed since Mme. Cornu has appeared in Compiègne, in spite of an invitation each year renewed. Her modest gown of plain black silk seems austere among these gowns of many colors. Under her grey, banded hair, she is now an old woman, small, quite humpbacked, with an ugly yellow face in which burn two black eyes worthy of admiration.

Almost at once General Rollin, Prefect of the Palace, approaches the Emperor, bows to him, then to the Empress:

"Their Majesties are served."

Napoleon offers Eugénie his arm. The guests chosen to occupy the places to their right and left at the table this evening, Count von Bismarck and the Countess de Pourtalès, M. Rouher and Lady Winchelsea, follow them at a distance of a few feet, then come all the other couples in an extended queue. The long trains of the Court dresses

sweep the parquets of two *salons* and a gallery, and enter the heavy, gilded dining-hall erected by Napoleon I to take the place of the former apartments of Louis XV. The immense table, beneath the fire of five great chandeliers, glitters with its spread of silver and crystal. Eugénie leaves her husband's arm, and the two sovereigns move down to the middle of the table and stand for a moment facing each other. Then the Emperor seats himself, the Empress does likewise, and after she has seated herself all the guests follow suit.

The table talk is frothy enough. An excursion, projected for the following day, to Pierrefonds, in *chars à bancs*, the fashionable jaunting-cars, furnishes several with a safe subject of conversation. The Empress talks with her neighbors, like an attentive hostess. The Emperor seems preoccupied. From time to time he lets fall a word or so of English which Lady Winchelsea, a sheep-faced peeress, gathers up with beatitude. Many say nothing at all. The newcomers seem embarrassed, especially the writers. Alfred de Vigny, his health undermined by an internal ailment, bows his ensanguined head under his long grey hair. Sainte-Beuve, bold, unhealthy in appearance, looks like a defrocked priest and eats for ten. Victorien Sardou does not eat at all; he observes everything with sparkling glances. Mérimée only is at ease. Did he not dandle the Empress on his knees when she was a child? With puckered brow, and empimpled nose, his eyes, as cold as those of some old hen, peering from behind a lorgnon, he is, without seeming to do so, spurring on the Countess de la Bédoyère, frank and mocking, who is apt to let fall some barrack-room phrase on occasion. Persigny, buried in his high collar and whiskers, replies

in monosyllables to the somewhat discouraged remarks of Mlle. Bouvet, extremely pretty, and fresh as a flower. "Beauty and the Beast," chuckles Mérimée. De Morny, reanimated by the first wine served, or some drug he has taken, whose manners always are those of a prince, whispers into the ear of the Countess Walewski, with whom he is on the best possible footing.

The food is mediocre. "What you'd get in a good second-class restaurant," says Princess Metternich. The luxury of the table service is largely one of appearance. The dishes and cutlery are not silver, they are *ruolz*, German silver. The Sèvres comes in only at dessert.

At intervals the music of muted strings sounds from the adjoining *salon*. It relieves the boredom, excuses the necessity of conversation. The Emperor, vaguely smiling at his dream, rolls bread-pellets. The Empress relaxes after a harassing day during which she has not had a moment to herself. At present she often seems preoccupied. Since the death of her sister, the Duchess de Alba, whom she loved dearly, and who passed away suddenly while she herself was visiting Algeria, Eugénie is less gay. Her mouth is tighter and the vivacity of her gestures is often exaggerated to brusqueness. Her tastes have changed. She is less interested in the world of society, fashions, and entertainment, and more interested in politics. Queen Victoria's example has inspired her with a desire to participate in the exercise of power. Her brief regency during the Italian War has initiated her into the conduct of affairs. Coming into daily contact with the ministers of that time, she has continued to question them with regard to matters of importance. She has her protégés, her confidants, her opinions. Extremely

devout, she defends the threatened rights of the Church on every occasion, trying to influence the Emperor against Italian liberal views, and to draw him nearer Austria, the only country in Europe which clings to that spirit of the ancient régime which haunts her. She has quite a fondness for England, whose queen had treated her as a friend and equal. She is suspicious of Prussia, a Protestant power, a recent and rapacious state. She would be pleased with the Russian autocracy, were it not for Poland, enslaved, a source of remorse both for her and Napoleon III.

The ices and fruits have been served. The Emperor lightly taps his plate. It is the signal that dinner is at an end.

The Empress rises. The couples reform ceremoniously and return to the Card Room, where coffee is passed around. Before long Eugénie disappears with several ladies to sit in her private drawing-room. Napoleon promenades among the groups, an engaging conversationalist whose charm is never at fault, and who leaves an impression of extensive intelligence paired with entire nobility of heart.

He spends some moments with the writers who, in spite of their rivalries, form an islet in this fashionable and political society. He compliments de Vigny on the revival of his "Chatterton" at the *Comédie-Française,* and promises to attend a performance in the near future. Then he asks after the poet's wife, half-paralyzed for some months past. The poet thanks him, sadly. Nothing any longer is able to move this great, disillusioned soul. Sainte-Beuve manages to call himself to the Emperor's attention, and with him the latter is less constrained. Literature

bores him. He finds poetry insipid. Novels—he declares them either immoral or imbecile—he holds in aversion. He is interested only in what he calls serious books, history, travels, rural economics, and especially, scientific works, which appeal to his inclination toward material progress.

With Mérimée, with Duruy, the historian, whom he often summons for long *tête-à-tête* séances, he busies himself collecting material for the *Life of Cæsar* he means to write. It is to be the crown, the apex of his career as a publicist. In it he will present a detailed analysis of the conquest of Gaul and the apologia of dictatorship. Cæsar appeared on the world's stage at the very hour when his presence had become necessary. It is, as always, the Emperor's theory of the man chosen by fate. His belief in it has not changed since he was a youth. The years, good fortune, power have been able to modify the surface aspects of his character, but they have not altered it.

He speaks to Sainte-Beuve of Carlyle and of Hegel, whose theories are akin to his own. And, compliant, the critic's prodigious memory offers the sovereign its riches, appositely supplying quotations and dates. The Emperor listens, twisting his moustache, now somewhat too black, and pats him on the shoulder before passing on.

"You must come and see me some morning at the Tuileries, Monsieur de Sainte-Beuve. We will work together."

Sainte-Beuve bows, delighted. This time, he thinks, he has at last set foot on the road to the Senatorial dignity so long promised him by his patroness, Princess Mathilde. For this vast intellect dreams of a ministry.

And now the Emperor has found his way to Count von

Bismarck. This man, at the same time rough and amiable, "a kindly ogre," full of intelligence and strength, pleases him. He would like to please, to charm him in turn. He believes that in him he can find an adroit and farseeing collaborator, who will help him to give Europe a more harmonious conformation. Prussia could only gain thereby. As the Piedmont of yesterday has become the Italy of the present day, so Prussia shall be the nucleus of the Germany of tomorrow. In compensation France would receive the left bank of the Rhine, and, perhaps, Belgium as well. Without war, and with the consent of the populations involved. These projects Napoleon III has as yet disclosed to no one. He keeps his ideas to himself for a long time, abandoning them, taking them up again, retouching them, letting them ripen. He never has had, never will have, any confidant entirely familiar with his political designs. He does not tell his secrets save by snatches, accidentally, even to the Empress. And then he at once withdraws within himself. Secrecy is at once his strength and weakness. His ministers are merely the executors of his will. He assembles them as infrequently as possible, works separately with each of them. And, side by side with these official agents are other unofficial ones, who, with regard to diplomacy as well as to foreign affairs, are the most important, and whose words make the greatest impression.

"I have just been told that you mean to leave us, Count Bismarck. And I regret it, while I offer my congratulations."

"I am the one, Sire, who will infinitely deplore being deprived of the honor of approaching Your Majesty. My

consolation is the thought that my transference to the ministry will only increase the good will now so happily existing between our two countries."

"Yes, yes, I know, my dear Count, that you love France. And it gives me much pleasure. Likes and dislikes count for more than one supposes in diplomacy. Given ministers of your sort, King William and I will always get along."

"Sire," said Bismarck, in the brusque off-handed manner he often affected, "I believe, like Your Majesty, that honesty and frankness are the best political instruments. The old-fashioned diplomacy whose aim is always to trick one's neighbor is pitiful." Napoleon III nodded his concurrence.

"Pitiful indeed. And its day has passed. Do not fail, my dear Count, on your return to Berlin, to express to your sovereign the sincere friendship I feel . . ."

He broke off. Led in by his governess, the wife of Admiral Bruat, the Prince Imperial has come, as he does every evening after dinner, to bid his parents good-night. He is now six years old, and has a fresh, clear complexion and an engaging smile. He looks like his mother. In his pretty black velvet costume, with its lace collar and cuffs, his graceful figure shows to advantage. He is not at all bashful. Standing as high as the boy himself, his great hound Nero follows him. The two are inseparable.

"This is my son," says the Emperor to Bismarck. "You have not as yet met him."

The boy holds out his hand.

"I have already greeted you in the *Bois de Boulogne,* Monseigneur," says the Count, his face softening.

With an absent glance the Emperor caresses the child's

head for a moment; then, with a gesture to the ambassador:

"Count von Bismarck, you must keep us company. We are going to have a game of quoits. You shall see what an experienced player Louis already is."

Accompanied by the little Prince and his hound, they move off to the end of the gallery, where various games have been set up. Napoleon stops at a long table covered with green cloth and fenced in by a gilded railing. At its further end a white ring represents the goal.

The Emperor gathers up the quoits, handing two to Bismarck and two to his son. Prince Napoleon, de Morny, Bacciochi, Haussmann, Rouher, Princess Metternich, and Anne Murat range themselves on either side of the table.

"Will you pitch first, Count?"

Bismarck bows and, drawing back, pitches his first quoit, after a moment's calculation. It falls quite near the goal. The Prince Imperial raises his little body and pitches his quoit, which falls a few inches short of the Prussian minister's. There is applause, then silence. The Emperor comes forward to pitch in turn. He blinks his eyes, balances his arm a trifle, and, suddenly extending it, lets fly with such skill that his quoit reaches the outer edge of the goal. The circle of the curious which has gathered goes into ecstasies. Attracted by the hubbub, the Empress leaves her drawing-room and also looks on, her arm around Princess Metternich's waist.

"Your turn, Count von Bismarck!"

The Count weighs his quoit. A perfect diplomat would see to it that he lost. But Bismarck wants to win. He always wants to win. In politics he often snaps the

thread of delicate maneuvers, dominated by an imperious urge to be the strongest. With a skillful cast he pitches his quoit so that, striking the Emperor's disk, it pushes it away from the goal.

"Bravo, Count von Bismarck!" cries the Emperor Napoleon III, who is a good sportsman. The Empress frowns slightly. Her son pitches. His cast is well placed, between that of his father and that of the ambassador. Admiration for his skill is loudly voiced. He flushes a little as the Empress, well content, embraces him.

It is the Emperor's turn to make the concluding cast. He pitches his quoit suddenly, without calculation, as though depending upon chance alone. The little disk falls exactly over the goal. The spectators clap their hands with delighted laughter.

"Bravo, papa!" cries the little Prince.

"You'll do as well when you're older, Loulou," says the Emperor.

For a moment Bismarck's face is shadowed by an expression of haughtiness. Then he bows, and with the inflection of the finished courtier, says:

"Your Majesty is absolutely without a rival in this game."

"Ah, that's because I sometimes used to play pitch-and-toss at Ham," Napoleon replied gayly. "You see, a prison has its good points. It is an experience you have never enjoyed."

"That I have to admit. But I shall practice, Sire, and some day you must give me a chance to take revenge."

"It's a bargain, my dear Count. Tomorrow, if you wish."

"Alas, Sire, I am compelled to take leave of you and of the Empress this very hour."

"I very much regret it. And yet I dare not insist on your staying. The duties which claim you are too important. We shall meet again before long, I hope. You must come to Biarritz for a week or two. I shall have various projects to communicate to you. We can accomplish something worth while together. I have a great opinion of your talents and am altogether prejudiced in favor of Prussia."

"I shall not forget it, Your Majesty," said Bismarck, "no more than I shall forget any of Your Majesty's kindnesses."

* * *

Napoleon, holding his son's hand in his own, turns back to the middle of the gallery.

"Louis," says the Empress, "you'll have to go to bed now. It is late and Madam Bruat is waiting for you."

"Bah," said Napoleon, "it is only ten o'clock."

"Mama, can't I stay up a little while longer?"

"No, it is high time for a small boy like you to be in bed."

And, for the Duchess de Mouchy's benefit, the Empress adds:

"The Emperor is too indulgent. I want to make a man of him."

The child starts to pout, then, his amiable nature getting the better of his disappointment, he kisses his father and the Empress—who swiftly makes the sign of the cross on his forehead—and with a little bow to the company at large, goes to his governess, his arm about the neck of Nero, for the dog has not left his side.

Side by side, Napoleon and Eugénie, with the identical smile, watch him go off. Their love for this child is the deepest feeling which they still have in common. Both of them are impassioned parents. Yet for Napoleon, Louis is "the little one," rather than the heir to the throne. Eugénie, on the contrary, cannot help but think of him as the future Emperor. She loves France, in a manner, through him, because of the glorious future France holds out to him.

The Empress returns to her ladies. The Emperor chats for a moment with Rouher, with Mocquard, and with Conneau. Then he is heard joking with Nieuwerkerque. The superintendent replies, caressing a beard which would do honor to a pasha. Splendidly Junoesque, Princess Mathilde, conversing with Sainte-Beuve, keeps her eyes fixed on her lover. She prefers to stay with the men. The women of this court bore her. She spends no more than the absolutely necessary modicum of time in the circle of the Empress, toward whom she acquits herself, with dignity, of the official duties incumbent on her position.

The Emperor approaches Prince Napoleon, a noticeably isolated figure. The entourage of the sovereigns detests him because of his almost uninterrupted opposition to the government, his cynical remarks, his disorderly habits, and that superiority which they feel is innate in him.

The Emperor draws him into the smoking-room, pulling on his cigar, and enters into a long discussion with him anent Italy, now reunited under Victor Emmanuel's scepter, and the irritating Roman question, which is embroiling him with his ally of Solferino and gaining him

papal anathemas. And yet Pius IX only maintains a hold on his scrap of a state thanks to a French garrison. Prince Napoleon wishes the Emperor to abandon the pontiff to his fate. Once more he harshly insists on his point. Napoleon III shakes his head, veils his eyes, and says nothing. When pressed to make a decision he shrouds himself in impenetrable reserve. He listens, listens with interest, patiently, but only forms his resolve by himself.

Soon he lays aside his segar and, descending, passes with his cousin into the private drawing-room.

There, surrounded by her friends, the Empress, seated at a table, is teaching Mme. de Las Marismas how to play Patience. She adores card-games; they are one of her favorite means of relaxation.

Seeing Prince Napoleon enter behind the Emperor she rises, furious to think that the Prince has seen her in too familiar a pose. She loathes him. She sees in him the indefatigable enemy, the avowed or hidden inspirer of the defamatory reports circulated about her among the public, of the pamphlets which represent her as a depraved and libertine woman. Pursued by the parallel of Marie Antoinette, like her beautiful and jealous, like her haughty and injudicious, she often—speaking of him to Princess Metternich, to Anna Murat, to Mérimée—calls him "My Count de Provence."

She is mistaken. Prince Napoleon has nothing in common with the wily brother of Louis XVI. His aversion for Eugénie is openly shown. Did he not, one evening at Compiégne, at the celebration of Sainte Eugénie's Day, refuse to drink her health? But he does not stoop to insinuations, to meannesses. He may speak much evil

of the Empress; he may blame her for many of the Emperor's infelicitous inspirations (wherein he exaggerates, for though Eugénie's influence has increased during the past few years, it is exercised upon the ministers rather than the sovereign); he may accuse her of preferring the interests of the Vatican to those of France; he may hate her, well and good. But this hatred is too great to admit of dissimulation.

At bottom, the inexplicable wrong with which he reproaches the Empress, is not that she is a Spaniard, a clerical, that she is avid for power; it is the fact that she had definitely thrust him away from the throne, him, Prince Napoleon, unquestionably more of a Bonaparte than the Emperor, and who, could he hold France in his hands, believes he would leave a dazzling wake of glory in history's track.

A pretender to the purple. An adventuress. This is what each privately calls the other. The interests of the dynasty, even misfortune itself, could not make them allies for a single hour. They will never understand, never pardon each other.

The conversation, lively and unconstrained before the Emperor's entrance, is suddenly chilled. Since he adores expansiveness and good humor he says:

"How would it be to consult the turning-table? What does my Chimène think of the idea?"

It is a pet name, this of the Cid Campeador's wife, by which he sometimes called the Empress.

Prince Napoleon shrugs his shoulders. Eugénie, measuring him with a glance, answers:

"I fear it would not be to every one's taste."

The turning-tables had been the season's great amuse-

ment. Ministers, ambassadors, marshals, even the Empress's chaplain, Monsignor Bauer, have sat at them, one after the other, in order to evoke the capricious spirits with more or less success.

The Emperor does not insist. He feels that the two adversaries are on the point of an outbreak. His back grows a trifle rounder as he once more takes his cousin's arm.

"Then the ladies shall dance. Come, Napoleon!"

He turns to a large barrel-organ placed in an angle of the Card Gallery. In order to maintain the intimacy of these evenings at Compiègne, the Court contented itself with this mediocre instrument.

The word of command given, the talkers get out of the way, chairs and tables are pushed aside. Many of the men make their escape. The mechanical notes of the barrel-organ beat out a polka rhythm. A few couples begin to dance. On armchairs and sofas along the sides of the room most of the women, surrounding the Empress, supply a live tapestry for the walls. Conscientiously the Emperor turns the handle. But he has no sense of rhythm. He hurries or retards the tempo according to the movement of his thoughts. The dancers either grow breathless or droop of inanition.

Mme. Conneau, the Doctor's wife, who speaks her mind to the Emperor well-nigh as frankly as her husband, laughs as they near the hand-organ, and says to the Minister of Police, with whom she is dancing:

"If the Emperor ever should ask you for a license to play the organ in the streets, for the love of music, do not give it to him."

She is a fine musician and sings beautifully.

The Emperor, hearing her, bursts out laughing.

"Madame," says he, "if I am reduced to such an extremity I'll take you for a partner. You shall sing and I will pass the hat. And we'll do very well."

After the polka, almost without a break, a mazurka is ground out. The Empress dances it with Count Walewski, who moves like an automaton. The spirit of the gathering is artificial.

"Sodom and Gomorrah," sighs Princess Metternich, jostling Count von Bismarck.

The evenings nearly always drag heavily at Compiègne. In the afternoon the hours are passed in promenades afoot in the forest, in games of *rallye-papers,* coursing, and visits to the Gallo-Roman cemetery of Croix-Saint-Ouen. The Emperor and Empress take pains to put their guests at ease, to ignore etiquette, to lead a life in their autumn retreat like that led in the great English country-houses, where dressing for dinner excludes neither individual liberty nor individual enjoyment. At times they are successful. Nevertheless, after dinner, when there is neither a theatrical performance nor a gala ball, boredom, abetted by the fatigues of the day, often weighs down every one, and faces can conjure up only a made-to-order smile.

The barrel-organ is now thumping out the opening chords of "The Beautiful Blue Danube." The Emperor stops and gives Fleury a sign:

"General, take my place for a moment, I beg of you. I'd like to dance myself this evening."

The dancers are in suspense. Courteously Napoleon slips among the couples and comes to offer his arm to Madame de Persigny. This blonde and gallant duchess

waltzes extremely well. The Emperor enjoys dancing with her. His German bringing-up has given him an intense foible for the dance. There is a good deal of youthfulness, not to say juvenility, left in this man of fifty-two.

A major-domo bows before the Empress. Tea is served in the small family dining-room, very plain in its white, Louis XVI decorations. It is a diversion to which all look forward. The night is mild. The windows, opened upon the park, allow the silent air to enter. Cup in hand, Napoleon III is talking softly with Baron Haussmann, who has been waiting for an opportunity to speak to him. The tall Prefect of the Seine is profiting by his stay in Compiègne to inveigle the Emperor into new projects for the transformation of Paris. He wishes to be appointed to the ministry, to have access to the Council. The Emperor pretends to misunderstand him. And, when Haussmann speaks too plainly Napoleon, who does not wish to give him the desired title, yet at the same time is averse to discouraging so useful an instrument of his reign, murmurs amiably:

"We shall see, Monsieur Haussmann. I shall think it over and we'll take it up again."

Midnight is near. The Empress rises and every one rises with her. She gives the assembly a smile and a brief curtsy, and retires without dismissing her guests. Certain outstanding ones among them have long since departed: Prince Napoleon and Princess Clotilde, de Morny, Mme. Cornu, M. Rouher. In English fashion the couples vanish, one by one.

The Emperor whispers a word or two to Count Bacciochi and leaves the gallery in his turn. He takes the

corridor to his study, then, opening a small door, after donning a black cloak with a large hood, which completely conceals his evening dress, provided by the Count, he slips off by himself, as nimble as a collegian, suddenly younger by twenty years.

He does not go far. In the small alley which winds behind the City Hall, he stops in front of a house of unostentatious mien, knocks at the door, which at once opens, and enters. As he does so a shadow which has followed him turns in its tracks and retraces its steps to the palace. The Emperor's secret is no secret to the police.

At present he is on the ground floor, in a modest *salon* in which a wood fire is burning. Supper has been laid out on a round table. The curtains have been drawn. It is warm. Seated on a green velvet couch, Napoleon holds in his arms a very pretty girl, blonde, plump, clear-complexioned, who laughs without ceasing. She is Julie Lebœuf, whom Paris, where she is one of the queens of the *demi-monde,* knows by the name of Marguerite Bellanger.

The years do not congeal his deep-rooted fondness for women in the Emperor. He has had any number of them, from grand ladies to lorettes, from wives of the *bourgeoisie* to milliners. He has transferred his favors from Mme. Walewski to Emma Deslions. Yet since Miss Howard's time he has established no permanent liaison. Marguerite Bellanger, whom he had first seen at the Italian Opera, whom he had sounded out by Bacciochi, and who had hastened to respond to his advances, has been his mistress for the year past. In this quite ordinary girl, come from Nantes to Paris to seek her for-

tune, he finds that charm of intimacy which he adores. In this furnished house in Compiègne, or in the hotel he has given her in Paris, in the rue des Vignes, it seems to him—his facile imagination aiding—that theirs is the love-nest common to any student and his *grisette*. And if Marguerite's opulent beauty satisfies his senses, her care-free and pleasure-loving character attracts him quite as much. In her company he forgets his political cares, the involute intrigues of his ministers and court. She is restful after the Empress's abrupt, contradictory manners and moods.

Eugénie has been informed by some officious person, male or female, of Napoleon's new passion. Still jealous, though she has long since ceased to consider her husband anything save the father of her son and the sovereign, she has overwhelmed him with passionate reproaches, going to the extreme of threatening to withdraw to Spain. She has sulked for weeks. These scenes make the Emperor very unhappy. He exerts himself to the utmost to calm Eugénie, to allay her suspicions. In this he is far less successful than he thinks. But the Empress, her first great anger over, little by little, has resigned herself. At bottom, perhaps, she may even prefer that the Emperor's infidelities, since she cannot prevent them, have for their object a person who does not belong to the court, one who never could pretend to be received there. And if he have a child by Marguerite Bellanger—and she has been pregnant, as a matter of fact, for the past two months—its birth will be no more productive of danger than the existence of Eleanor Vergeot's two sons. The child will be dowered; if necessary it may even be awarded a title, but it will remain

in the shade, without in the least prejudicing the Prince Imperial's rights. For her part, when she gives it thought (for in spite of her irruptions of opinion, she has good judgment), the essential thing is that nothing develop to hinder the future, her son's reign. For it is in him that she now places all her hopes. It is to guarantee Louis's heritage against the Emperor's whims and imprudences that she has become initiated into affairs and at present, even against her husband's wish, insists upon sharing his power.

PART FOUR

Shadows

He wiped his forehead, shining with perspiration.

"Should the Empress come, Goutellard," he said to the *valet de chambre,* "do not let her in. I do not wish her to know I'm ill. It would upset her. Say that I had been working late—with M. Duruy, let us suppose—and I am still sleeping. I think I need rest more than anything else. For it really is nothing serious, is it, Conneau? You do not think it will be necessary to operate?"

Very sensitive, feeling physical suffering most keenly, he dreaded it, had a horror of medical attention, and, especially, of surgery. For ten years he had refused to take to his bed for a single day.

Doctor Conneau, at the foot of the Emperor's couch, closed his instrument case.

"No, Sire," he said, "provided you submit to a pretty severe regimen."

"I'll do whatever must be done. I am still needed. My son is so young! I must have a few years more. After that . . ."

"You will have many years, God willing, if you are sensible. The trouble with which you are afflicted is not dangerous in itself. It can be neutralized by proper diet, frequent baths, and local remedies. It is quite possible that the crisis you have just undergone will not recur. In any case, we will delay its recurrence and ameliorate it."

"It is very painful," sighed Napoleon. "And though you have a light touch, my dear Henri, you hurt me very much."

"It was necessary, Sire. But do not be alarmed. We will fall back on this means as little as possible. If you drink plenty of Contrexéville water the stones in the bladder will be gradually reduced. But suspend your audiences, do not work hard, see to it that you lie down as much as possible. Avoid all fatigue, especially a certain kind of fatigue which diminishes your vitality, and makes you an easier prey to the ill of which you suffer."

He was insistent, raising his finger.

"You know what I mean, don't you?"

"Yes . . . yes . . . Conneau, you are my Mentor."

"A Mentor whose advice is little heeded," said the Doctor, with a smile.

"That is because I am no longer as young as Telemachus, dear friend."

"Exactly. You have reached the age where this species of excess lowers the will power and clouds the intellect. Harmful in the case of the individual, such indulgence is far more dangerous in a sovereign. If Louis XV was so weak during the last years of his reign, he owed it to the Parc-aux-Cerfs."

"You believe that?"

"Yes, and so do you, but you do not like it."

"What will you have? It is my sole distraction."

His head on the pillow, he did not move. He was very pale; his hair and moustache, which the *valet de chambre* had omitted to dye, were grey.

As the Doctor rose to go, he stopped him.

"Stay a little while longer, Henri. We'll have a chat."

"A nap would do you more good."

"I'm not sleepy. I find it more and more difficult to sleep, Henri. I'm awake one night out of two. I have so much to think about, so many cares! Nothing turns out as it should."

He sighed. Conneau sat down again by the bed. Napoleon's senior by five years, too sincere to try to comfort him with words, he considered his friend, and considered himself in this troubled poignant hour when all that man has kept of his youth, so many desires, so many illusions, so many fires of the spirit still aflame, struggle against the approach of age, which weighs body and mind with leaden soles.

Summarizing his reveries, Conneau said:

"The autumn of all life is sadder than its winter."

"True," murmured Napoleon.

Like himself, the Empire was passing through a period of depression and grave unrest.

The elections of 1863, handled by Persigny the pig-headed, had been notable for a disquieting success on the part of the Opposition. Legitimists, Orléanists, and Republicans, united against the official candidates, had secured two million votes, a third of the total number of ballots cast, and had elected thirty-five deputies. In Paris the whole anti-imperialistic ticket had gotten in. Napoleon had deprived Persigny of his portfolio, to the great content of the Empress, who could not forgive his insolence in insisting to the Emperor—by letter—that she no longer appear at the sessions of the Council, at which she now frequently participated.

Persigny had dared to say to Napoleon:

"You let your wife manage you as mine manages me, but I, at any rate, only compromise myself."

This had not prevented the Emperor, when dismissing him, from making him a duke, with a large dotation. The ministry had been reconstituted in a more liberal spirit. But the charm which had lulled asleep the country for ten years was failing. Illusion was dying. The Catholics would not forgive the Emperor for having allowed Garibaldi to achieve Italian unity, save for the Roman enclave. The manufacturers protested against the commercial treaty with England, which, favoring agriculture, on the other hand made their products unprofitable. In order to resist the competition of Manchester and Birmingham they had been forced to lower their prices. The factories closed down. The immense public works under way throughout the country let up owing to lack of money. The budget deficits increased. That splendid front of activity and power which, after dazzling France, had dazzled Europe, was cracking.

Abroad there were other reasons, also serious, for inquietude. Urged by de Morny, interested in recovering the Jecker loan, swept along by Eugénie, inflamed by the idea of founding in America a Catholic monarchy capable of bridling the Protestant United States, and, besides, reviving the plan he had formerly caressed in Ham, when he dreamt of building an interoceanic canal, Napoleon III had committed himself in Mexico to an expedition which, month by month, became more burdensome and dangerous. The Archduke Maximilian, Francis Joseph's brother, had accepted the crown of an Emperor of Mexico. But deserted by England and Spain, her associates in the affair at its beginning, France alone was left to supply him with money and troops. How would the adventure

end? On a ticklish footing with Victor Emmanuel, whom he was preventing from taking Rome; suspicious of Prussia, which, since Bismarck's attainment to power, had changed her tone, become dictatorial, and undertook to lord it over all Germany, Napoleon, in addition, had quarreled with Czar Alexander, with regard to Poland. Public opinion in France had been aroused in favor of an unhappy people in revolt for the defense of its faith and last remaining liberties. Warsaw, flung to earth and suffocated with blood, made Paris mutter, from the Tuileries to the suburbs. Workmen, Aristocrats, Republicans, Legitimists, Freethinkers, Clericals, Prince Napoleon as well as the Empress, all France unanimously demanded that the Emperor intervene to snatch these ultimate victims from their Cossack butchers. Napoleon III had done so. He, too, like Montalembert, believed that "since the assassination of Poland Europe was living in a state of mortal sin." He had demanded the convocation of a Congress to bring the Polish cause to its attention. The Russian autocrat had rudely refused to have anything to do with it, and had continued his brutal trampling of his victims. And when France insisted, all those powers upon whose coöperation she relied, cowards or traitors, excused themselves. It had been necessary to yield, to keep silence, and to abandon Poland to her martyrdom. It left a poignant regret in Napoleon's soul. And yet, could he, alone, fling himself into a new Crimean War? The war in Mexico was enough, alas!

"Nothing turns out as it should," repeated the Emperor. "I am misunderstood. I am not popular. Pietri gives me the most distressing reports of public opinion in Paris. Filthy libels are written about me, about my private life.

Even the Empress is not spared. Ah, my dear Henri, politics are imposing only at a distance! Seen from Arenenberg, power seemed a noble thing. How commonplace it becomes in the Tuileries!

"It is very hard to assure a nation's happiness. Human capability is too limited. There are too many trammels, too many hindrances, too many pitfalls, and the worst obstacle is not human institutions, but humanity itself. Men are petty, void of real intelligence, lacking in generosity. They must always be dominated, groomed with an iron hand. And you know, Henri, that cannot be kept up. Besides, I am poorly served. I am deceived. I cannot see everything, yet I know very well that I cannot depend on a single minister. Deferential, protesting their devotion, they all go their own way, in accordance with their personal fears and interests. The one secretly remains an Orléanist, the other bargains with the Left, the one inclines to Italy, the other to the Vatican. They say that such and such a one belongs to the Empress's party. No one belongs to the Emperor's party. And yet, my party is the party of France. For me there is no other."

He was not far wrong. His authority had diminished, little by little, like some stream which loses itself in the sands. Influences which formerly had but little weight in his decisions, now that his will-power was crumbling, grew more audacious and aggressive. Eugénie, de Morny, and Rouher pulled the imperial policies one way and another, "thrusting me aside," as Napoleon said at times. One gesture would have sufficed to recall that he was the master, but he did not make this gesture. He still commanded; but he no longer controlled the execution of his orders. And control is half of government. Owing to the

indolence natural to him, the lassitude of maturity, the reaction to his physical maladies, he no longer dictated events, but merely followed them. He remained perspicacious and clear-sighted; he was seldom deceived, but he was loath to reprimand. He neither wished nor knew how to punish. More and more, he enveloped himself in a mute, distant reserve, which still served to delude others, but which, to his familiars in the palace, poorly masked the debilitation of his character.

Conneau was unable to reply to this plaint. He understood his friend and suffered with him. He was only a faithful watchdog, a repository of his secrets, fond of the Emperor to a degree which caused his wife to take umbrage, and resembling Napoleon in his habits, his vocal inflections, his very carriage. Like him, he never had a *sou* to his name, though more than a million francs from the privy purse passed through his hands every year to be distributed in individual charities. His only hobby was a collection of Bibles printed in every known language.

The Emperor raised himself a trifle on his pillows. Conneau rose and shook them up behind him.

Napoleon went on as though he were quite alone.

"Rouher is adroit. I believe he is loyal enough, but he does not share my ideas; he does not think as I do, he never will. He is a crafty lawyer, making his plea, his brief-case open before him. And, besides, he has too great an opinion of his own ability, he is too sure of himself. He never hesitates. Can you understand that, never having a single misgiving when it is a question of a country's affairs? Drouyn de Lhuys knows his business, but he crosses me in order to show his independence. He hides dispatches from me. A diplomat of the old school,

he shuffles and hedges. Baroche is a heavy, solemn toiler, but he would serve any government for the sake of the office. There is good stuff in Duruy, but he has retained too much of the academic spirit. . . . I look for men and fail to find them. Is it possible that they're to be found in the Opposition? I know that you claim they are. But Émile Ollivier and Jules, aren't they lawyers, first of all; mere fine-looking, sounding cymbals. And besides, how could I make use of these gentlemen? In spite of all that de Morny says, they do not give me credit for my good intentions, they are not grateful for any sacrifice I make. The liberty which I have restored to the Legislature and the press is abused in order to attack me, to make me look smaller in the eyes of Europe."

He interrupted himself:

"By the way, did you go to see de Morny, as I asked you to? How did you find him?"

"In bad shape. Everything about him is keyed up to the breaking-point. He is completely worn out. He feels it, but does not want to admit it, in order not to make the slightest change in his mode of life, which would kill a colossus. He carries on upon every front: business, politics, love. Doctor Oliffe stuffs him with his pills."

"I'll speak to de Morny when I'm myself again. If necessary, I'll have the charlatan come here and will forbid him to poison the Duke with his drugs. Poor de Morny, he's the only level-headed man in France of whom I know."

He stopped to reflect for a moment, then added:

"De Morny has a penetrating mind. Do you know what he told me the day after this recent bad election? 'The serious thing about a *Coup d'État* is that it is tanta-

mount to an agreement made with good luck.' Well, he's right. A dictatorship makes strength and good fortune compulsory. A dictatorship cannot make mistakes; it must always succeed."

Again and again his thoughts turned to the Second of December. He would have given much if the Empire, at its beginning, could have dispensed with those barricades, deaths, and deportations. Deep in his soul he blamed himself for them. And the oath he had failed to keep. . . . Nevertheless, it had been necessary, for the country's good. Yet it had condemned him to lasting remorse.

Conneau gently remarked:

"All reigns have their changing periods. They can only be judged collectively. Behind you lies a decade of prosperity and greatness. Clouds have arisen, but they will pass. You have not divorced your good fortune."

"I hope not, at any rate. The present is uncertain, but the future may make up for it. After all, my son will realize what I myself have been unable to accomplish. To ameliorate society, to reconstitute the life of a people on durable bases, is the work of several generations. My reign will merely have been the preparation for another, more glorious and more decisive. . . . You see, Henri, this is my dream: when the Prince Imperial reaches the age of twenty-one I shall abdicate, and go off to live quietly in the company of a few old friends like you, in Switzerland or at a villa in Biarritz."

Conneau smiled.

"What does the Empress say to that?"

"Bah! she will have grown old as well, and she will think only of rest."

The Doctor shook his head.

At Saint-Cloud

In order to receive Charlotte, the Empress of Mexico, the French sovereigns had come down to the foot of the stairway. Eugénie was protected by a small flexible parasol, with green silk trimmings. She closed it suddenly when, escorted by a troop of *Cent-Gardes*, the barouche appeared. The evening before she had paid Charlotte a visit at the Grand Hôtel, where the latter had stopped, incognito. They had not talked politics. Yet to Eugénie the Mexican breakdown was both an insult and a cause for remorse. She looked at her husband. He did not move. In his frock coat, his head bared, he had that air of remoteness he displayed on weighty occasions.

He now came forward to help the Empress from her carriage. Tall, well-formed, with a round, credulous face, and two chestnut-brown goggle-eyes, their gaze fixed and lustrous like that of a bird, she wore a black taffeta gown, a lace mantle, and a white hat. She seemed restless. Two small ladies of honor, brown and homely, accompanied her.

The three royal personages slowly ascended the stairway of the château and took their way to the Empress's study.

Napoleon had no more than led Charlotte to an armchair, and was addressing some obligatory commonplaces regarding her voyage to her, when a major-domo entered,

with a salver laden with glasses and a pitcher of orangeade.

Eugénie took a few hasty steps toward him.

"Why are we disturbed? What are you doing here?" she asked haughtily.

"If Your Majesty pleases to excuse me, Mlle. Bouvet ordered me to offer this refreshment to Her Majesty the Empress of Mexico. She is accustomed to taking it every day at this time, so she was informed."

"Very well," said Eugénie. She took the salver, and herself filled a glass, which she tendered her visitor.

Charlotte drew back, as though frightened.

"No, thank you," she said somewhat brusquely, "I'm not thirsty."

"But since it is your custom to do so, I beg you to drink, my sister. It is so warm today. I shall take a glass myself."

Eugénie poured herself a glass and drank. Charlotte's eyes never left her. She raised her own glass, looked at it for a moment . . .

"I shall have to drink it, won't I?" she said in an odd tone of voice.

Shrugging her shoulders, she emptied it at a single draught, while Napoleon and Eugénie watched her with surprise.

She wiped her forehead with a small handkerchief which she held tightly in her moist hand and almost at once, as though she feared that the Emperor might speak first, she said, stressing each syllable:

"My brother, I have come to ask what you really mean to do with regard to Maximilian? No one in Europe is

aware of my voyage, neither the Emperor of Austria nor my own relatives . . ."

"Marshal Bazaine must have told you," began Napoleon . . .

Charlotte interrupted him:

"Marshal Bazaine told us that you had commanded him to set in motion the retreat of the French Expeditionary Corps. We did not believe him. It is impossible. Or, if you have reached such a decision, you have been misinformed with regard to our situation. I am here to give you more reliable information. There are things that can be said only face to face. Besides, Max and I, we have no confidence in the Marshal. He turned against us from the time we arrived in Mexico."

"The Marshal may have acted injudiciously. He seems somewhat rough, and ready to take offense. But he is an experienced leader and a loyal soldier. All that he has done, my sister, has been to conform to the instructions which—with a bleeding heart—I have been obliged to give him. . . . Pressing reasons compel me to recall my troops."

"But it is impossible, Sire! You would abandon us at the very moment when our rule, after so many efforts, is on the point of being firmly established? We have had some very depressing times! But Max is young and brave. He will overcome all his difficulties if only you will support him a little while longer."

"My sister, you only make me more unhappy. And, believe me, I am unhappy enough as it is. . . . I will tell you what I have told no one else. My funds are giving out. The three hundred millions secured by the last loan have been swallowed. At present I cannot float another.

It would not be taken up. The Mexican War has never been popular in France. The Opposition uses it as a means to undermine my authority. And that is not all. I have received the most disagreeable remonstrances from England. And if I keep my soldiers in Mexico the United States have let me know that I will have to fight them. So far it amounts to nothing. But the European balance of power is threatened. Prussia has just beaten Austria at Sadowa. It may be that a united Germany will attack France tomorrow. From this moment on I need all my strength; I would be betraying my country if I allowed my veterans of the Crimea and of Italy to sacrifice themselves so far away in a hopeless campaign."

Charlotte stretched out her arms imploringly to the Emperor, like a child:

"But you cannot do that," she repeated. "You do not know the whole truth. Bazaine is deceiving you. He tried to have the ship on which I embarked at Vera Cruz stopped by a cruiser. He was afraid that I might denounce his intrigues, his crimes. His crimes! He has put Mexico to fire and sword. He has had thousands of Republicans shot *without trial*. He has made your name execrated and has dishonored your flag."

With dignity Napoleon replied:

"No man, whatever faults he may commit, can dishonor the flag of France. I shall see to it that Bazaine's actions are subjected to a strict investigation, and I promise Your Majesty, should he be proved responsible for such excesses, a court-martial will pass judgment on him, as soon as he returns. You shall have justice, my sister, justice positive and complete. But remember the Marshal has had to contend with the greatest difficulties, and, alas,

in the interests of his army, he has been obliged to act with rigor."

"He has made us hated, hated, and that will bring us misfortune, as you shall see."

Her half-suffocated plaint was so poignant that Eugénie trembled.

Charlotte was tearing the *mantilla* which lay across her knees into small strips. The Emperor made as though to speak. The poor woman stopped him with a gesture.

"If you withdraw your regiments, we are lost. Juarez has raised the whole country. Even the clergy, well-nigh everywhere, now supports him, the clergy which, when we arrived, received us in processional, under a dais. Our soldiers melt away in Indian ambuscades. There's not a thicket, not a rock that does not serve to hide a rebel. We no longer have any money, any credit, any arms, or any ammunition. We no longer have anything. All we can do is to die. Will you allow us to perish thus wretchedly? It was you, Sire, who sent us to Mexico. It was you who urged my husband to accept the crown. You promised him coöperation without limits, to the very end. So we left for that accursed country where even the whites have the hearts of savages. We believed in you. We should not have done so. . . ."

Napoleon seemed impassible. Only an occasional twitching of his lips betrayed his emotion. He could not give in. The war in Mexico—as his cousin Prince Napoleon repeated to Tom, Dick, and Harry, after having cast it in Eugénie's face—was one of those mistakes which cost an empire. The failure was one which had to be liquidated while saving appearances in the eyes of the

world, and leaving to time and the improvement of circumstances the repair of a rifted prestige.

He was entirely resolved, resolved as on former occasions, when no argument, no power could get the better of him. His soul was wrung by the unfortunate woman's supplications. But he would not bend. Eugénie knew it. She knew to what degree it was necessary for France, for their government, that the gaping Mexican wound be finally closed. She had wanted this war. She had gotten it under way, together with Hidalgo, with de Morny. Her Spanish imagination, avid of splendors, had visioned a triumphal replica of the adventure which aforetime had yielded a world to the caravels of Cortez. Tenacious, ardent, she had done all in her power in order that this risky expedition might come to a successful end.

"It will be the greatest idea of the reign, and I will be the one who thought of it!" she told Pauline de Metternich. And even when the first reverses had occurred, she had not feared to say to the Minister of the United States:

"If my son were not a child, I would send him to Mexico, to head the French army."

The diplomat had replied, without any circumlocution:

"Madam, thank God that the Prince Imperial is still a child!"

Her plan was on the road to destruction. Confronted with the danger of a Europe turned upside down by the insolent Prussian victory, she had understood and given way. She had resigned herself.

But Charlotte's arrival, her distress, the haggard abandon of her voice and gestures were so many whips lashing

her pride. She went up to Napoleon and, trembling, said to him:

"Wouldn't it be possible to make one more effort? Couldn't we leave the Expeditionary Corps for a few months longer?"

"I cannot. I have pledged my word to the Council . . ."

"Part of it, at least, Louis! . . ."

She, too, who did not know how to bow her head to the inevitable, entreated, pleaded with him.

For a moment the Emperor seemed to hesitate. With lively anguish he pressed his palms together, one against the other. Then he regained his self-control.

"I would have done so before Sadowa. After Sadowa, you must realize, Eugénie, that it is no longer permissible for me to do so. Randon, the Minister of War, tells me that in the event of a clash with Prussia we will have only one French army corps to oppose to every two Prussian ones at the present moment. It is necessary for Bazaine's soldiers to be back here before three months are over. And, during those three months we are at the mercy of any incident."

"Three months!" murmured Charlotte.

Her eyes glittered, grew cold with horror. Eugénie put her hand to her face in order to avoid meeting their glance.

"My sister," Napoleon gently resumed, "it is not without sorrow, deep sorrow that I have made this resolve. By withdrawing from Mexico I saddle myself with a disavowal that is almost an humiliation. I would give ten years of my life to be able to avoid it. But as I have told you, I cannot. Mexico is an abyss into which France

is sinking. Hard though it may be, she must be snatched from its brink."

"Then we must die, since you will have it so."

"Your disappointment, after so many struggles, is very cruel, but at the Emperor Maximilian's age, one should not despair. Why will he persist in a superhuman task? I ask him to leave Mexico when the French troops do. To leave with his head high, without yielding, without abdicating, with all the future open to him. And I count upon you, my sister, to persuade him to listen to my voice, the voice of his best friend. You will save him from himself, you, who will oppose the advice of the hotheads who surround him and who are thrusting him into the pit. Go back and find him. He loves you. You will return to Europe with honor."

Several times in succession Charlotte shook her head in negation.

"You are sentencing him to death! Well, then, he shall die. . . . My dear Max! . . ."

"Not if he will be reasonable, my sister. After a momentary eclipse he may experience a most brilliant turn of fortune, in Mexico itself, where his name will become greater as soon as he has left, or else in the Old World. I have already thought that, with his brother's aid, I might set up a throne for him in the Balkans."

Charlotte savagely reiterated:

"Maximilian will die. He will refuse to flee. A Hapsburg does not flee. You do not know him."

"Giving up an empire impossible to establish is not taking flight. All Europe will applaud a wise resolution which will save much blood and many tears."

Charlotte burst out laughing.

"Blood! Tears! Ah, they'll continue to flow! And this time it will be your fault! There will be much blood spilled. Be it on your own head!"

She had risen. Eugénie, terrified, ran over to her, tried to take her hands.

"I suffer as you do, dear friend. Be brave . . ."

Charlotte pushed her away so violently that Eugénie almost fell.

"I don't want pity . . ."

And turning to the Emperor, whose shoulders drooped, she said:

"I regret having come here, to this palace which once belonged to my family. How could I have forgotten who I am—and who you are. The blood of the Bourbons runs in my veins. I have humiliated it by imploring a Bonaparte, an adventurer."

And suddenly she toppled over backward. Before either the Emperor or Eugénie could intervene she was rolling on the floor, her limbs twisted, shrieking, writhing in convulsions. Napoleon precipitated himself to summon aid.

"No, no!" cried Eugénie. "Wait a moment!"

She had uncorked a small vial of cologne which she always carried about her, and kneeling beside Charlotte, she tried to lave her temples with her handkerchief. The unfortunate woman struggled. Then, all at once, she stiffened and lay motionless, in a sort of cataleptic fit. She breathed faintly, her eyes wide open, but turned so far back that their pupils were no longer visible.

"Help me!" murmured Eugénie.

Together they carried her to a sofa. Engénie undid her stays.

"Now send for help and leave us. It will be better so."

The Emperor opened the door. Mlle. Bouvet and the two ladies-in-waiting who, trembling, had heard the uproar of the scene, entered:

"Quickly, a doctor!" cried Eugénie. "Doctor Semeleder should be somewhere about the place. Bring water and smelling-salts!"

Seconded by the Countess del Barrio, one of the Mexicans, she energetically massaged Charlotte. Mlle. Bouvet brought in the smelling-salts. They made the sick woman inhale them. She sneezed and was shaken by a violent ague.

"Manuelita," she said to Madame del Barrio, "is it you? Do not leave me."

She looked at Eugénie with horror. And as the Empress bent over her, a glass of water in her hand, she straightened up in a fury, a veritable mad woman. With both hands she swept away the glass, which spilled over Eugénie's gown and was smashed on the carpet.

"Assassins, leave me! You are murderers! Take away your poisonous beverages!"

Eugénie, who had sought refuge in a corner of the room, was choking.

Charlotte began to weep noiselessly; great, heavy tears which rolled down her cheeks and inundated her half-bared breast. She did not make another movement. And this noiseless flood of tears was more terrifying than the nervous attack which had preceded it. Suddenly she sank back in a faint.

"Let her be for a moment," said Eugénie.

She was exhausted. She seated herself and signed the three women to seat themselves as well. They sat in silence as though watching by a deathbed.

Europe in Paris

"Enough, be our cry:
Let's end the dance,
The Kings have passed by."
SIXTEENTH-CENTURY SONG.

"BRAVO!" cries Count von Bismarck, as the curtain falls on the first act of *La Grande-Duchesse de Gérolstein,* "bravo! that's just what it's like. They've hit it off to the life!"

He laughs until his eyes fill with tears, delighted with this burlesque evocation of one of those petty German Courts whose antiquated manners and ridiculous pretensions he so detests.

In the theater they are shouting:

"Schneider! Schneider!"

The curtain rises and Hortense Schneider advances to the front of the stage, leading by the hand her two colleagues, Couder, who plays General Boum, and Baron, who enacts Grog, the Minister of State.

In a hussar dolman, her powerful bosom constellated with orders, riding-whip in hand, she comes forward to the footlights, blonde and smiling, her eyes very bright, and facing the imperial box fronting the stage, sweeps an impeccable court curtsy to the group of sovereigns who, surrounding Napoleon and Eugénie, applaud her without restraint. The audience, standing, pays tribute to her with a deafening ovation. From every part of the house

flowers rain upon the stage. Hortense stoops, picks up a bouquet of roses, then, bowing once more, she blows a kiss in street-urchin style and vanishes.

In the imperial box sounds a merry babble of conversation. The Czar Alexander is there with the Prussian King William, Francisco d'Assisi, King of Spain, the King and Queen of Portugal, Queen Sophie of Holland, Louis II, the old dethroned King of Bavaria and his grandson Louis, the King regnant, and Ismaïl, the Khedive of Egypt. Behind them, standing, are heirs apparent to crowns, the Russian Grand-Dukes Wladimir and Alexander, Humbert of Italy, Frederick of Prussia, Henry of Saxony. At the back of the box, shaped like a *salon,* are grouped ministers, ambassadors, generals, and a few ladies of high degree: Metternich and his princess, Gortschakoff, the Russian Chancellor, the Count de Goetz, Nigra, Rouher, Baroche, Prince Murat, Marshal Canrobert, General Fleury, Princess Mathilde, Nieuwerkerque, the Duchess of Manchester and, beside the colossus Bismarck, red in his white cuirassier uniform, a stunted silhouette in black evening dress, Mérimée.

The Empress, gowned in rose-colored silk, her shoulders bare, adorned with her great emerald necklace, her brow filleted with a diadem of pearls, is resplendent as in her best days. All these kings who have hastened to Paris on the occasion of the Universal Exposition of '67 intoxicate her with compliments and homage. They make her forget the depressing cares of power, the failures in foreign policy, France compelled to give way in the Luxembourg affair, the dragging Mexican tragedy, Charlotte insane, Maximilian a fugitive. The stage-setting of power amid which she moves restores to her the illusion of French

grandeur. The preceding evening she had given her crowned guests (secretly dedicating it to her very own sovereign, the King of Spain) a nocturnal fête at Versailles such as had not been seen even in the days of Louis XIV, with illuminated fountains playing, the whole park peopled with violins, the great canal covered with gondolas, a supper of six hundred covers served in the Gallery of Mirrors, and fireworks whose hundred thousand rockets set the sky ablaze. Such a display of material splendor reassures her. This evening, at the *Variétés*, seated between the Czar and the King of Prussia, she laughs wholeheartedly at the remarks of the former King of Bavaria, who, leaning down, for he is very tall, tells her jokes of a kind far removed from the conversational style of courts. He points to the wen which ornaments his ravaged head:

"Would you believe that as a child I was a very pretty boy?"

Then, as a gallant homage to Eugénie, he begins to speak Spanish. He does not speak it well, though he pretends to be at home in every European language.

"I love Spain," he says, "and I have always admired the Spanish women. A Spanish girl even cost me my throne."

The Czar and Eugénie look at him, embarrassed by so frank an avowal. It had, in fact, been the dancer Lola Montez who, some twenty years earlier, had compelled him to abdicate as a result of the follies she led him to commit. He recalls the happening with entire unconcern.

Noticing Prince Joachim Murat, who is talking to one of the grand-dukes, he asks his name. The Empress is obliged to raise her voice noticeably, for he is deaf.

"Murat? Yes, yes, Murat. Why, I can remember the

days when M. de Metternich was the lover of his mother, the beautiful Catherine."

The entire box hears him, and first of all Prince Murat, who shrugs his shoulders and then, making the best of it, laughs with the rest.

In spite of Eugénie's attentions the Czar, however, refuses to unbend. He seems fatigued. His protruding eyes, the heavy moustachios which join his whiskers, his pig-jowls and Kalmuk nose give him a silly look. Napoleon III has built high hopes on his visit to Paris. Gradually cast adrift by England, since Sadowa he has been dreaming of a Russian alliance, that alliance which poor de Morny—he is dead now—never ceased to advise as the sole guarantee of the European balance of power. Alexander, on his arrival, seemed willing enough. Unfortunately, two serious happenings have spoiled his stay and have offended his haughty, taciturn soul.

Visiting the medieval Sainte-Chapelle, in the mass of buildings making up the Law Courts, with his sons, he was greeted by a cry tantamount to an insult, in view of his harsh repression of the Polish revolt.

"Long live Poland, *sir!*"

It was Gambetta who, in the midst of a group of young lawyers, who were his friends, had shouted this.

The next day, after a review at Longchamp, a Polish laborer, Berezowski, had shot at the Czar with a wretched pistol. Only the horse of the equerry Rainbeau was wounded. When informed of the outrage, Eugénie hurried to the Elysée, where the Czar was lodged, and, embracing him, wept on his shoulder. Alexander seemed touched. Nevertheless, a few days later, diplomatic conversations were under way between his chancellor, Gort-

schakoff, and Bismarck. Russia was drawing back and approaching Prussia.

Napoleon is talking to King William. He had tried to avoid his advent. He feared that his passage through the streets might be marked by manifestations on the part of the Parisians, who cannot forget that two months before Prussia seemed on the point of attacking France. Besides, Napoleon is still embittered by the successive setbacks which Bismarck's cunning has caused his projects to undergo. The large white cuirassier who laughs so frankly at Hortense Schneider's couplets, has become the most influential man in Europe. Everything he takes in hand succeeds. Since the crushing of Austria he seems a giant force which pushes on toward its ends, squashing all that stands in its way. Napoleon had counted upon making an associate, an ally of this rough, daring diplomat, altogether modern in his ideas, who beneath an often coarse animation showed a keen understanding of European problems. He had hoped to captivate him, to convert him to his views. Bismarck had made a fool of him. Three times. First at Plombières; then at Biarritz, in 1865, when the Emperor had demanded the right bank of the Rhine in the event of Prussian aggrandizement, and thought he had secured it. After 1866, cynically unveiling the ambitions of France, Bismarck had rallied the whole south of Germany about him. And yet he never ceased holding out hopes to Napoleon. Why did not France annex Belgium? It was a tempting morsel. Napoleon had first wanted to have Luxembourg ceded to him. But Prussia at once objected to this. In May, a conference held in London proclaimed the perpetual neutrality of Luxembourg and positively established the French retreat.

General Fleury, a Parisian to his very fingertips, points out to the Khedive, the young King of Bavaria, and the grand-dukes—who during the intermission have come down to the front of the box to gratify their curiosity—the outstanding men and women who, famous in politics, art, literature, or pleasure, make up that Paris which is the dream of all Europe, which it approaches only with a joy touched with timidity, and whose memory lingers like some form of light intoxication.

In a box prominently in view, and not at all worried by protocols, the Prince of Wales, his blond beard outspread, is leaning on the shoulder of the Prince of Orange, whom the impure call "Prince Citron." Certain ladies keep him company. But Fleury's eyes fail him; he does not recognize them. And yet, yes, it is the inimitable figure, the eccentric grace of Cora Pearl!

"Cora Pearl!" repeats the Khedive. In his palace at Esbakieh, reading the scandal-sheets, he is better acquainted with her fame than that of Pasteur.

The lower tier of the same box holds M. Thiers and two of "his women," his mother-in-law, Mme. Dosne, and his sister-in-law, arrant intriguers both, wearing an air of conceited respectability.

A little further on Émile Ollivier is talking with an old man in a gold-laced coat, the astronomer Le Verrier, a senator of the Empire and an experienced courtier, who is beginning to flatter the possible minister of tomorrow in the present chief of the Opposition in the Chamber.

In one of the proscenium boxes sit Prince Galitzin and the Duke of Fitz-James with a red-haired young woman who is extremely thin, and whom people are beginning to discuss: Sarah Bernhardt. Facing her is the Duchess

de Castiglione, "Her Ugliness" as she calls herself, and, in an exaggerated décolleté, a curious, vulgar creature, no longer received at the Tuileries, Mme. Rimsky-Korsakoff. Beside her is Delphine Ugalde, accompanied by the Marquis de Modena. In other boxes, elaborately gowned, covered with jewels, surrounded by young dandies and elegants with impeccably parted hair and flowing whiskers, are the fashionable "marble girls," Emma Deslions, La Barucci, Marie Colombier, Blanche d'Antigny, the *café-concert* singer Thérèse, and forty or fifty more, a motley battalion, many of whose members, delighted to take part in an historic evening, assume airs of great discretion, and, their eyes modestly lowered, toy with gloves or bouquet and refrain from laughing.

The defeat of the crinoline is positively assured. Princess Metternich has been the first to abandon this bastard sister of the hoopskirt, and the fashion has spent itself in her wake. Even the lower orders of kept women now wear only straight-falling gowns in peplum style, of light material, and in gay colors, among which green, yellow, and lilac dominate.

In the orchestra seats, chattering, gesticulating, showing off far more ostentatiously than the sovereigns whose figures they are appraising, reign the lords of the press, the gods of tittle-tattle and criticism—Paul de Saint-Victor, Émile de Girardin, J. J. Weiss, Doctor Véron, Prévost-Paradol, Villemessant, Nestor Roqueplan, Arsène Houssaye, Edmond About, Philippe Gille, Monselet, Aurélien Scholl, Léo Lespès, Roger de Beauvoir, Paul de Cassagnac, Victor Noir, Henri Rochefort, the whole *Boulevard,* everybody from Tortoni's . . .

The curtain rises. In successive waves silence settles

down on the small blue-and-gold auditorium, filled to running over with Paris. Fritz, the improvised general, leads back his army to Hortense Schneider, seated in a gilded armchair, crown on head.

> Madame, in four days I have fought the war;
> Your soldiers won, the foe decamped, afraid,
> And so, today to you I can restore
> Your worthy father's venerated blade."

The Grand-Duchess de Gérolstein rises and embraces the sacred relic.

"Let it be placed in my museum of ordnance . . ."

Fritz, swaggering, hand on hip, recounts the defeat of the enemy, whom he overthrew with wine:

> Your men did marvels, this fight gaining,
> At eve, I proudly can attest,
> At eve, the battle-field maintaining,
> Victorious, they sank to rest.

The nimble, merry music, through which courses the verve of Paris itself, fills every soul with its foaming lightness, makes every one feel inclined to be easy-going and indulgent. The Empress is enchanted. It is she who, in spite of the shock dealt the protocol, has decreed this *soirée,* so different from an official gala occasion. How right she has been in so doing. Meeting the Emperor's glance, she smiles at him, half unawares. He smiles affectionately in return, content to think that the misunderstanding resulting from a new infidelity of his, a fantasy of a few nights with Mlle. Léonide Leblanc, has ended. His cheeks are a little puffed, but with his waxed moustache, a touch of rouge on his cheek-bones, he makes a very passable appearance. His health, in fact, has im-

proved. The hematuresis from which he had suffered at intervals has disappeared, and this has greatly relieved him. The piling up of festivities has somewhat tired him, but he will first go to Vichy to rest, and next to Saint-Cloud, when the Sultan, and later the Emperor of Austria, who does not wish to meet the King of Prussia, will have come to the Exposition. And then he will enjoy a real vacation . . .

* * *

At the second intermission the Empress rises. In the drawing-room improvised at the rear of the box, sherbets are being passed around. Napoleon, to whom King William has spoken in a low tone of voice, gives an order to Nieuwerkerque, who goes out.

In a gown of canary yellow with black velvet trimmings, Princess Metternich, her back turned to Bismarck, whom she now affects never to see, even though they may stand side by side at some reception, is telling anecdotes about the diva's career.

"She wanted to appear in comedy when she was only ten. After having seen a fairy pantomime, she told her parents she'd kill herself with the big kitchen knife if they didn't let her become an actress. They had to give in. She made her début in Bordeaux, marked time for a couple of years, and then came to the *Palais-Royal,* where 'Belle-Hélène' carried her to the top of the ladder. Without counting her perquisites (the Princess winked an eye) she's getting prodigious bonuses at present. Coignard engaged her for the 'Grande-Duchesse' at three-hundred and fifty francs a night! Patti never got as much."

Open-mouthed, a circle of kings surrounds the Princess:

"Three hundred and fifty francs," says old William. "In fact, it's a tremendous sum."

He is economy personified.

The Spanish king, Francisco d'Assisi, frail-bodied and jaundiced, replies in his falsetto voice:

"Allow me, but she has expenses."

Princess Mathilde says to her cousin, the Queen of Holland, loud enough for her neighbors to hear her:

"I like Mlle. Schneider better in 'La Périchole.' I do not care for her when she wears a crown. One sees that it has only been lent her for the evening. Besides, one should no more make a plaything of the crown than of the axe."

No one takes exception to her remark. But the Czar gives her an approving glance. At any rate, in this frivolous court, she thinks nobly.

A little later, finding herself close to Napoleon, Mathilde grasps his hand and whispers in his ear:

"I congratulate you, Louis. It is Erfurt over again."

"Ah, no," he murmurs, turning toward her. "We must not exaggerate. Mlle. Schneider is no Talma, and Europe has changed since our uncle's day."

He knows whereof he speaks. The brilliance of these gatherings, the amicable deference of these sovereigns, do not prevent the increasing difficulties which beset his reign. It makes him happy to receive with such splendor, here in Paris, all these princes, many among whom have treated him as an upstart in the past. Yet tomorrow . . .

Nieuwerkerque is back, accompanied by the director of the *Variétés*, Cogniard, and by an ungainly individual, whose ill-fitting garments suggest an old-clothes shop. His bristling hair hides his neck, and cascades over his

ears to rejoin his drooping side-whiskers and his straggling beard. His eyes, hidden by glasses, are invisible. A tremendous curved nose fills his entire face.

"Why, the man's a genuine tapir," chuckles Princess Metternich.

Nieuwerkerque, nevertheless, formally presents Jacques Offenbach to the sovereigns. The Emperor compliments him in a few courteous phrases. The Empress shows herself most amiable. She even speaks of staging at Compiègne, during the coming season, not "Orphée aux Enfers" or "La Belle Hélène," which call for too large a cast, and some of whose couplets are a trifle too improper, but "Barbe-Bleue" or "Les Brigands."

Sweating with joy, yet nervous and embarrassed, Offenbach wipes, drops and retrieves his glasses. He expresses his thanks, bowing like a long marionette. The King of Prussia urges him to come to Berlin to conduct a series of performances.

"You will be very successful," says Bismarck. "You will see, Monsieur Offenbach, that we are no Scythians. Besides, in a measure, you are one of us . . ."

The Khedive also invites him. In two years' time the opening of the Suez Canal is to be celebrated. And then the *mæstro* must come to Cairo. There, too, it is his hope to see all Europe represented.

"I promise to visit you," says the old Bavarian Jackpudding, who is furthest removed from the Egyptian viceroy's thoughts. "I've already mentioned it to M. de Lesseps. He is distantly related to you, Madame, is he not?" he asks the Empress.

"We are fourth cousins," says Eugénie, coldly enough,

though she likes de Lesseps and has always supported him.

"I am told Your Majesty is expected at Suez for the great event. We'll go together. And we'll have a jolly good time. You must come, too, Princess," adds the ex-king, turning to Mathilde. He likes her all the better because she so often snubs him.

"I hardly think I will, Sire," answers the Princess, gayly, "you would compromise me."

The Crown Prince of Saxony, Chevalier Nigra and the grand-dukes gather about Offenbach, who is surmounting his shyness and displaying a *boulevardier's* wit disguised by a German accent.

The Czar does not deign to speak to him. Nor does the young King of Bavaria, handsome as Apollo, and extremely haughty. The fantastic friend of Wagner, he sees in Offenbach a traitor to Art in the highest.

A bell rings thrice. The orchestral prelude begins. Cogniard and Offenbach make their escape. The imperial guests return to their chairs. The air is heavy. The gas-flames of the chandelier burn in great petals which cast off a soft, golden light. Setting an example followed by all the women, the Empress fans herself. And the entire auditorium is animated by a rhythmic palpitation which keeps time to the music.

The third act begins. The Grand-Duchess confides her jealousy of Fritz to General Boum. The conspiracy which is to rid her of her faithless lover is set under way. Here the comedy seems to drag a bit. Attention is relaxed.

The congestive Khedive keeps his eyes glued to his opera-glass. A moment ago Cogniard, in a discreet

aside, has promised to take him in to see Hortense Schneider. Frederick of Prussia is eyeing Cora Pearl. The Grand-dukes Wladimir and Alexander, looking somewhat boobyish, would give a good deal to be able to slip into the orchestra or into a ground-tier box. They envy the Prince of Wales and the Prince of Orange, who have managed to escape from the official loge. Queen Sophie of Holland, humble, absurdly gotten up in a cerise-colored gown she cannot wear out, but has somewhat rejuvenated this season with white lace, her hands folded upon her bosom, is thinking:

"My friend Napoleon made a mistake when he invited all these people. France will seem too beautiful, too rich to them. She is altogether too tempting a prey.

"My son seems quite at ease here. He is making signs to many ladies. I wonder do they really call him 'Prince Citron'? The Empress does not seem to take him seriously. It is easy to see that he is intimate with the Prince of Wales. That is dangerous, at present, perhaps. But it is not a bad thing for the future."

The Czar thinks:

"These French are insolent. They are a people without religion, order or stability. They turn everything decent into ridicule. Yet one amuses oneself among them. One even amuses oneself too well. My sons expect to stay on in Paris after I have gone. They needn't count on it. . . . I must see von Bismarck again tomorrow."

King William thinks:

"Lampoon Germany in your songs, my friends, poke fun at our armies. You do not know them. The Longchamps review was magnificent. Only—all that I saw

there were picked troops, and not so many. A fine exhibition parade and no more. France is not so strong as I imagined. The Emperor has no mind of his own. At present the Empress dominates him, to judge by the way she speaks to the ministers, and spoke to Rouher just a moment ago. One might think she was reigning. She has treated me and Frederick with reserve. She displays consideration only for this abortion of a Spanish king. She does not like us and makes no bones of showing it."

Preoccupied with politics to a greater extent than was believed, Prince Humbert of Italy, very much of a background figure and, so to speak, set aside, thinks:

"My father deceives himself. I shall write him. The alliance that Nigra recommends will put us in the position of a vassal. Napoleon never will allow us to occupy Rome. It is better for us to wait, not bind ourselves. Prussia has the backing of all Germany. Her alliance has already given us Venetia. Perhaps it will give us Rome as well. We must now look to Berlin rather than to Paris."

On the stage Hortense Schneider is singing the "Ballad of the Goblet," a parody on "The King of Thule":

> 'Twas an ancestor of my name
> Who, if my mem'ry's what I think,
> Boasted that mighty was his fame,
> Among men knowing how to drink.

At this moment, in the imperial box, Fleury hands Napoleon a dispatch which has just been brought by an aid-de-camp on duty. The Emperor holds it in his hand a moment without opening it out of courtesy to his guests, and, partly, owing to a vague fear. For a long time he

has received nothing but bad news. His luck, once so brilliantly favorable, has turned. The Empress's eyes seek his own. She is anxious—wants to know. Napoleon, with a word of apology to the Czar, opens the telegram.

There is but a single line:

"Queretaro surrendered to Juarez. The Emperor Maximilian a prisoner."

Unfortunate man, thinks the Emperor, he is lost.

Not a muscle of his face moves, however. Discreetly, behind Alexander's back, he passes the telegram to Eugénie. She reads. Two great lines draw down her mouth. Her bosom heaves. The hall rings with laughter as the audience applauds the Grand-Duchess, who is reducing General Fritz to the ranks. Bravely, Eugénie still tries to smile. Yet she feels that all within her has grown rigid, has petrified. A mask of insensibility has descended upon her changing features. She sits very erect, the little paper folded in her hand, filled with terror and with rage. . . .

On to Berlin!

In the billiard-room, on the ground floor of the château, the Empress, surrounded by a few intimate friends, is waiting to hear the news from Paris. She cannot stand still. Taking long strides, she passes from one to another, hardly hearing what is said. When her son's governor, General Froissard, enters the room, followed by the young prince, she calls out to him:

"Have you heard anything?"

"No, Your Majesty," answers the General. "I thought the Emperor had returned to Saint-Cloud."

"He should be here. The council of ministers is over long ago. If he has remained at the Tuileries, I do not understand why the Emperor has not sent me a few words to let me know what is happening."

With a gesture of impatience and followed by her reader, Mme. Lebreten, she rejoins Marshal Vaillant, Minister of the Imperial Household who, with all the excitement a youth might show, is talking with Colonel de Gallifet, the Duchess de Mouchy, Conneau, and Bacciochi.

"The ministerial declaration of the sixth is very moderate in tone," affirms the Marshal. "We can take no other position with regard to Prussia's machinations. France will not permit the reëstablishment of the empire of Charles the Fifth."

"A Hohenzollern king of Spain," mutters the Empress, "no, never!"

Not alone is her Castilian pride concerned, but the success of one of her projects is in question as well. She had hoped to secure the vacant throne for the young Prince of the Asturias, Isabella's son, whom she counted on marrying to her niece, Mlle. d'Alba. Prim's offer of the crown to the Prince of Hohenzollern has been a double blow to her.

Her head thrown back, her hands clenched behind her back, quivering with indignation, she says:

"Marshal Prim has sold himself to Bismarck. But I would rather abdicate than let them have their way."

Vaillant, red-faced beneath his white hair, bursts out laughing.

"Do not worry, Your Majesty! You'll not have to abdicate. On the contrary, an era of glory is opening up for the Empire. We will tear away the Sadowa winding-sheet that has been smothering us for the past four years. We'll never again have so good a chance. The right is on our side. And the whole nation is backing up the Emperor."

"Ah," says Gallifet, "so far as that goes, there is no doubt but that public opinion is in favor of war. On my way here, I saw bands of students passing along the *Boulevard* singing the Marseillaise. Workmen were fraternizing with them. From the café terraces, from the windows, thousands of voices were cheering them, shouting: 'Down with Prussia! On to Berlin!'"

"That's the real Paris," opines Conneau, reflectively. "Paris will always be the city of the first impulse."

"Paris! It is not Paris alone," retorts the Empress. "It is all France. Look at the papers . . ."

On a table beside her are laid out the morning papers. She picks up a few, hapchance.

"Here's the *Pays*. Cassagnac writes:

"The Emperor can no longer let us remain with our heads bowed in the dust. Five days have already passed since France decided to fight. She revolts against ministers who do not know how to defend or protect her, and she addresses a supreme appeal to the Emperor himself.

"And *le Gaulois, l'Opinion nationale, la Patrie,* each insists that Prussia be humiliated!"

"Will Your Majesty allow me to observe that these papers, more or less, are all supporters of the government's policies."

The Empress stamps her foot:

"Yes, Doctor, you want to say that it is the official press, that it is inspired by the ministry. But look at the *Moniteur universal,* at *Figaro*—they are no friends of ours. They say the same thing. M. Veuillet as well. Here—"

She unfolds *l'Universal* . . .

"Opinion is unanimous in insisting upon energetic action. It will be disappointed if the matter is diplomatically arranged.

"And the *Gazette de France,* the Legitimist organ, jeers at us for holding back:

"Peace triumphs. Prussia keeps the fruits of Sadowa.

"Yet the *Temps* and the *Débats* have remained very calm, and advise moderation."

Eugénie shrugs her shoulders.

"They are indulging their grudge against us; they are sacrificing the national prestige to gratify it."

Lisping, with that Italian accent of which he has never been able to rid himself, Count Bacciochi reads a few lines from Girardin's fulminant article in *la Liberté:*

"Should Prussia refuse to fight we will force her to cross the Rhine and evacuate its left bank with the butt-ends of our muskets.

"Do you hear, Conneau? That's what Émile de Girardin says!"

"Even the English papers, the *Daily Telegraph, The Times, The Standard,* Conservative as well as Liberal, say we are in the right," remarks Monsignor Bauer, the Empress's chaplain.

Triumphantly the Empress resumes:

"Nor can we attach any importance to the ravings of a wretch like Rochefort, who has sworn to ruin us. In an hour like this those who do not rally around the Emperor are disloyal to France."

And it is true that in France the vast majority inclines to war. The nation has wearied of Bismarck's perfidies. It believes that a short and glorious campaign will restore her to that eminence which she occupied in Europe on the morrow of the war with Italy, and which, little by little, has become weakened, diminished, and lost.

"The Legislature," declares Gallifet, "is in such a state of excitement that the ministry would fall today or tomorrow if it were to make any further attempt to mark time."

"M. Thiers smells a rat," says the Empress. "He sent word by Massa that he was entirely at our disposal."

"He told me the same thing," adds Anne Murat,

Duchess de Mouchy, "and I informed the Emperor at once."

"One must be on one's guard with M. Thiers," remarks Madame Lebreton; "he is double-dealing and fickle."

"Never fear, my dear, we have no intention of accepting his offer of aid. We do not have to. Yet it is significant. Thiers knows who is in power, and he is trying to shift over to the successful side."

Monsignor Bauer, folding his hands over his velvet waist-band, remarks benignly:

"On the other hand, I can assure the Empress that Gambetta himself, at the meeting in la Sourdière, declared that the Hohenzollern affair was a mere detail, but that one should profit by it to terrify Prussia and exact the destruction of the fortresses menacing our frontiers."

Eugénie seems impressed by her almoner's words.

"Monsieur Gambetta is a phrase-monger," says she. "One can put no faith in his oratorical outbursts. Nevertheless, I am not sorry to know about this."

And, twice in succession, she repeats:

"Even Gambetta, even Gambetta!"

Spick and span in his new second lieutenant's uniform, his ash-colored hair lightly curled and showing a well-defined part, the little Prince, gallant and good-looking, asks:

"Then war has been declared, Mama?"

"Not yet, Louis, but I don't see what can prevent it now."

"What luck!" cries Louis. "What luck! Now I'll have a chance to fight."

The Empress looks at him with pride, and, turning to the Doctor, says:

"There, Monsieur Conneau, you see. You are the only one who is afraid of war."

For all she appreciates the frankness and devotion of her husband's oldest friend, she cannot refrain from showing a trace of disdain.

Ill at ease, yet unabashed, he replies:

"I admit, Your Majesty, that I hope we may be spared war in a manner reflecting honor both on the Emperor and on France."

The Empress shrugs her shoulders. And the others draw away a little from the Doctor. To tell the truth, there are days when he makes all too sorry a courtier.

It is for a reason none can imagine that he dreads an armed conflict. He must keep silence. Both his professional code and his promise to the Emperor bind him. For the past two weeks, Napoleon III has been suffering from a recurrence of his bladder trouble. His hematuresis has reappeared. Conneau has to use his probe several times a day, causing the patient intense suffering. How can the Emperor, should he join the army, support the fatigues of the campaign? A physical breakdown on the sovereign's part might give rise to terrible consequences, might provoke a catastrophe. The Empress knows that Napoleon is suffering from a recurrence of his malady. Yet she gives it but slight heed. Blessed with rugged health, she is only rarely indisposed and never admits it when she is. She calls the Emperor "soft," and pokes fun at Conneau, whose remedies, so she says, make her husband feel even more depressed. The Doctor, whose diagnosis has been stone in the bladder, has insisted on a consultation. On the first of July Nélaton, Ricord, Germain Sée, Fauvel, and Corvisart had met at Saint-

Cloud. They had been unable to agree. It would be necessary to operate. Yet who would dare assume the responsibility, seeing that the surgical intervention attempted by Nélaton the preceding year, in the similar case of Marshal Niel, had caused the latter's death? Two days later, Doctor Sée, individually, had sent Conneau a report, constating the existence of a purulent cyst caused by a stone formed in the bladder. The Emperor had read it. Yet, owing to fatalism or weakness or, perhaps, fearing that if the news were made public it would cause a panic and sap his authority at this grave moment, he had sealed Sée's report in an envelope and told Conneau, in a tone admitting of no reply:

"Keep it and don't breathe a word of it to any one."

That is why the Doctor finds himself unable to share the martial enthusiasm of the palace familiars.

"If Prussia were to give in," he asks, "if King William does not authorize his relative, the Prince von Hohenzollern, to accept the crown of Spain, what will we do in such case?"

The Marshal's heavy voice rings out:

"Prussia will not give in. I always put myself in the other's place in order to estimate a given situation. Would we yield if we were in Prussia's place? No."

"But for argument's sake, my dear Marshal, admitting that either from fear or as the part of wisdom, she does give in?"

"We'll go to war just the same!" cries Gallifet. And he dares add, in a loud tone of voice, forgetting that Eugénie is present:

"Even though the Emperor is against it, France will force him into war."

"Don't get muddled up, Gallifet," says the Marshal. "If war were to be avoided at this time, by some miracle past belief, some other incident would plunge us into it in a few months' time. Bismarck wants war. He's a fool who is leading his country to destruction. We must profit by his mistakes. Our army has never been in better shape. It is to our interest to take the leap at once."

"The question of armament makes me a little uneasy," General Froissard, a man of colder, more reflective type, remarks. "The new Prussian needlegun, so they say, is better than ours. As to their artillery . . ."

"Come, come, General," answers the Empress, "Marshal Lebœuf in the presence of both the Emperor and myself, insisted yesterday that we are stronger than the Prussians in every branch of the service, both on a war and on a peace footing."

"With soldiers like ours," declares the Duchess de Mouchy, "France is invincible."

"At the very least," resumes Marshal Vaillant, "we have nineteen out of twenty chances in our favor. Our trans-Rhenan campaign will be a thunderbolt cutting Germany in two. We will make a single mouthful of Prussia. You shall see, it will be a second Jena."

A chamberlain approaches Eugénie:

"Your Majesty, the Emperor has arrived."

Outside the sentries can be heard presenting arms.

"At last!" exclaims the Empress.

Followed by Bourbaki, the aid-de-camp on duty, Napoleon enters, glances amicably about him, and, going over to Eugénie, says, loudly enough for everyone to hear:

"Well, it's peace!"

He seems happy, as though at some deliverance, among all these faces which have turned gloomy. He lets himself fall into an armchair near the billiard-table. Forgetful of etiquette, all surround him, the little Prince in the front rank.

"I don't understand. What has happened?" demands Eugénie.

"At the Tuileries, a moment ago, while the Council was in session, the Spanish ambassador, Olozaga himself, brought me a dispatch from Prince Anton von Hohenzollern, saying that in view of the complications his son's, Leopold's, candidacy for the Spanish throne had caused he was withdrawing it in his name. I said nothing to the Council, the dispatch as yet being unofficial, but a little later I had Ollivier informed."

One can hear a pin fall in the silence surrounding the Emperor. Somewhat astonished, he goes on:

"Nigra came and I told him the news. Finally, I sent for Lebœuf, and instructed him to suspend the preparations on which we had decided. . . . I am glad it is all ending in this way. A war always is a major adventure. Tomorrow morning at the Council we will draw up the instructions to be sent the ambassadors."

His auditors all seem filled with consternation.

"The country will be disappointed," remarks the Empress.

"That may well be, but what can we do about it? I am well aware that in its present state of excitement public opinion would have preferred a conflict. Nevertheless, the Hohenzollern renunciation offers a satisfactory

way out, and removes all pretext for war, for the moment, at any rate."

"A dispatch from 'Father Anton,' says Eugénie, contemptuously; "that won't be enough."

The Emperor does not reply. He takes his son's hand and gently caresses it.

"And I," declares Bourbaki, furious, "I was already getting my campaign kit in shape."

"You're another who pushes on too quickly, General," says Napoleon, smiling. "Suppose an island were suddenly to surge up between France and Spain. Both lay claim to it. Suppose it disappear. What would they have left to quarrel about?"

"It's self-evident," declares Froissard.

Conneau nods his head in agreement.

"I don't see things that way," replies Eugénie. "We are threatened. For the moment the threat is averted, it passes us by. It may return in the future. Doesn't our dignity demand that our apprehensions in this connection be entirely removed?"

"We must insist that Prussia apologize," says a daring voice.

The Emperor starts up.

"Who says so? You, Gallifet? You're arguing like a hussar, my dear Colonel. There can be no question of apologies. One does not demand apologies from a sovereign who is at the same time a gentleman. The King of Prussia could make but one reply to any such pretension: send his passports to Benedetti. No, no apologies. Yet . . . perhaps . . . a confirmation of the Prince von Hohenzollern's withdrawal. And even that calls for a delicate touch . . ."

He repeats:

"A delicate touch . . ."

"One should no more fling oneself headlong into peace than one should fling oneself headlong into war," growls Marshal Vaillant.

Feverishly Bourbaki unbuckles his saber and stands it against the billiard-table.

"If France has reached such a pass," he cries, "I'd rather resign from the army."

The Emperor, hurt, frowns.

"You are wrong, General," the Empress says vivaciously. "You are wrong. A man like you should not say such a thing. Unfortunately," she adds, turning to her husband, "I greatly fear that it's the way the whole French army will feel about it."

The door opens.

"Ah, here is Persigny!" cries the Emperor. "You're fresh from the Legislature. What's doing there?"

"There is still a great deal of agitation, Sire," says the Duke, after a brief greeting. "The majority still seems to favor war. I'm not sure but that the ministry will be overthrown. Clément-Duvernois insists on questioning it regarding the guarantees it means to insist on to avoid a recurrence of future difficulties with Prussia."

"Bravo!" cries the Empress. "That is just what I was saying. . . ."

"Guarantees . . ." declares Napoleon, impressed, "which guarantees? It's a very delicate matter. And still, Duvernois is not altogether wrong. It's possible that something might be done in that way. I have asked Gramont to see Werther, the Prussian Minister, incidentally, to try and secure his admission that King Wil-

liam had advised and approved of 'Father Anton's' disclaimer."

"It's merely another way around," says Persigny, severely, "but the Emperor of the French, when it comes to a question affecting the nation, cannot content himself with an ambassador's complaisances of interpretation. The matter should be treated on the upper level, between sovereign and sovereign, no matter at what risk."

"Ah, Monsieur de Persigny," returns the Empress, suddenly reconciled to her tenacious adversary, "your words do credit to one of the Emperor's best friends."

An usher comes forward.

"Sire, His Excellency the Minister of Foreign Affairs is here, with a communication for Your Majesty."

"De Gramont? Show him in!"

He rises and takes a few steps in the direction of the Minister who, very elegant, and a bit ponderous, first makes his bow to the Empress.

"Well, my dear Duke, have you seen Werther? Speak freely. This is a family party."

In suitable language de Gramont makes clear that though he has been received by Herr von Werther, he has been unable to extract anything from him.

The Prussian Minister insists on declaring that King William knows nothing at all about the waiver.

"Under these conditions," says Eugénie, "we have no guarantee that tomorrow—as already has happened in the case of Roumania—Prince Leopold will not post directly off to Madrid, in spite of his father's dispatch, and tell them: 'Here I am, I accept the crown which you have offered me.' "

"Your Majesty's fears are legitimate," says de Gra-

mont. "All things duly considered, Prince Anton's action is not binding on his son, who is a free agent and of age."

"Then his word is not enough for us. We must have a surety. The King of Prussia should endorse the disclaimer of his cousin and vassal. His promise will suffice. But we must have his promise."

The Emperor touches de Gramont's arm.

"Let us go to my study. All this calls for reflection."

They leave the billiard-room, accompanied by the Empress.

"Ah, you are coming with us?" says Napoleon.

He would have preferred to closet himself with his minister. He dreads Eugénie's sudden impulses.

"Yes," she answers, piqued. "What is going on is serious enough, I judge. My son's future is in question."

In his study, the doors closed, the Emperor says to de Gramont:

"Come, what are we to do? Duvernois's interpellation —an untoward one, by the way—somewhat changes matters. We'll have to reconsider the situation. But calmly, very calmly."

"Sire, as Her Majesty the Empress but just remarked, I judge that we shall now have to demand a guarantee of Prussia. The satisfaction offered us is laughable. It will not satisfy public opinion. If we do not secure a formal reparation, France will be cheapened in the eyes of Europe. And every Frenchman will reproach the Emperor for such an injury. It would be . . ."

He did not venture to continue. The Empress draws herself up.

"Come, come, Monsieur de Gramont. Say just what

you think. I think the same. It will be the end of the Empire."

"No, Your Majesty, I do not go so far . . ."

"Very well, but I do. It is another Sadowa in the making. After the mistakes of which we've been guilty, for we have made mistakes—oh, I am not blind on that score!—we can no longer subject the nation's pride to a fresh trial. We must have a reversion of prestige, whether it be secured by diplomatic means or otherwise, a revenge. Otherwise, we are moving toward a revolution!"

"Your Majesty's alarm is exaggerated."

"No, no, I cherish no illusions, that's all. Opposition to the Empire is growing. Rochefort and his friends bespatter it with mud. That business of Prince Pierre Bonaparte's has done us a tremendous amount of harm. The brute's pistol-ball killed Victor Noir, but it also deeply injured our government. We are no longer beloved, we are no longer respected. The Republican press, now that we have been stupid enough to give it free rein, tears us to pieces, day by day. There is no kindness for us, no justice. Any pretext will do to wound us. They even try to attack my son! When little Cavaignac refused to take his prize at the *Concours général* from Louis's hands, all the 'Reds,' and even the Liberals, howled with joy like the savages they are! Let them insult me. Let them attack me. I laugh at them! But when they begin to attack my son, ah . . . then! . . ."

She laughs jerkily, in a strident, choked, formidable voice.

"I beg of you, Chimène . . ." says the Emperor.

Many a time this name by which he calls her when she

is overwrought makes her lower her voice. This time it does not moderate her vivacity.

"I am not disquieted on the Emperor's account or on my own. If France should no longer want us, some day, I could live without a palace, without a court, somewhere, anywhere, and never regret it. But I want my son to reign."

"Have no doubts, Your Majesty; he will reign."

She strikes the writing-desk with both hands and addresses her husband:

"I can recall the day—hardly two months ago—when, happy at the outcome of the plebiscite, you took Louis in your arms and cried: 'Long live our little Emperor!' You reproached me for not sharing your joy. It was because I saw further than you did. Behind the seven millions who voted 'Yes,' I saw the million six hundred thousand who voted 'No,' a great, silent multitude which had gradually increased, made up of the envious, the embittered enemies of authority, concord, and religion, of all those who cannot forgive us the eighteen years of prosperity and happiness we have given France. . . . Well, if you continue this policy of delay and resignation, if you do not take advantage of some external success, you will find, not thirteen hundred thousand voices, but double, triple that number raised against you tomorrow. And our son will not reign."

The Emperor says nothing. Hunched up in his chair, his shoulders pushed forward, his head down, he feels his soul turn within him. He is extremely weary. The illness from which he suffers clouds his brain. He realizes the gravity of the decision to which the Empress, with de Gramont's help, is committing him. Yet how is he to

resist this torrent of words, this authority which, more and more, Eugénie exerts over him, which she insists on exercising over all those who surround her.

Bitterly she says:

"It was de Morny who put our neck in the halter with his liberal policies. He wanted to be forgiven for the Second of December. And Walewski pushed ahead along the same road, though he had nothing for which to be forgiven. You have listened too much to both of them. The Liberal Empire! A fine discovery! As though the two words did not swear at each other."

"Let de Morny and Walewski rest," says the Emperor; "they are dead. And they were honest in their intentions; that in itself is a great deal. I restored parliamentary government to France in order the better to assure my son's accession to the throne. As for the Second of December, we would not be here without it."

Eugénie bites her lip. She has gone too far.

"Undoubtedly, and yet it is a memory which has become an obsession with you, which weighs upon your policies, which drives you to make dangerous concessions. It will lead you to your ruin; it is high time to stop."

"It has nothing to do with the case in point. We are talking at cross-purposes. What would you suggest, my dear de Gramont?"

"Sire, I would propose telegraphing Benedetti an order to call at once on King William, in Ems, and to demand his promise that in no case will he authorize his cousin to reconsider his refusal."

For a moment Napoleon hesitates.

"Telegraph this evening? . . . I had promised Ollivier

to do nothing before tomorrow's meeting of the Council . . ."

"Nonsense!" cries Eugénie. "The responsible government may be worth something—though I doubt it—but only if it does not paralyze the executive power at a moment like this. Are you the Emperor, yes or no? Are you the chosen head of the nation, the representative of France? Her honor is at stake. One does not wait when one's honor is at stake."

"I will arrange matters with Émile Ollivier . . . Send the telegram, de Gramont. Use forms that are courteous yet firm. Say that feeling here runs very high. Make the King of Prussia clearly aware of the alternative . . . If he should refuse . . ."

"If he refuses, we will declare war," says the minister, cavalierly.

"Yes, war," says the Empress, more seriously. "I prefer war to revolution."

"Besides," Napoleon continues, as though he himself wishes to bolster up his decisions with further motives, "we have plenty of other grievances against Prussia, aside from this Hohenzollern affair. . . ."

He does not explain himself, but his thought is quite clear. He has an old outstanding account to settle with Prussia, for compelling him to treat with the Austrians at Villafranca too soon. After that, on various occasions Bismarck has "put one over on him," as he terms it . . .

"A successful war will rejuvenate the Empire," declares Eugénie.

"If only it be successful . . ." murmurs Napoleon.

"Can you doubt it? Have you not heard what your generals say?"

"Sire," declares de Gramont, "the Empress is right. You are the master of the hour. Your army is the first in the world. And Prussia is isolated, while we have alliances."

"In that connection, de Gramont, where are you at with regard to Austria and Italy? They must be induced to sign an offensive and defensive treaty within a few days' time. The matter urges."

"I saw Metternich as I was passing out from the Council. He again renewed the assurances he has already given me. The Emperor Francis-Joseph has not changed his mind. But first he wishes Italy to pledge herself."

"What does Nigra say?"

"The King and Visconti-Venosta are obstinate. They continue to insist that our troops must evacuate Rome. I was evasive on that head."

"Leave the Pope unprotected against Garibaldi's bands, give up Rome to the Italians? That is out of the question," says the Empress. "You share my opinion, I hope, my dear Duke."

Gramont bows gallantly.

"If France defends her honor upon the Rhine, Your Majesty, it will not be in order to sully it by the Tiber."

"Excellent, excellent. You have a heart, my dear de Gramont."

She takes both his hands in hers.

"We will make some concessions, however," says the Emperor. "We will have to make them. We could, for instance, withdraw our soldiers from Civita-Vecchia. That might answer. Victor-Emmanuel is an honorable man, he will not give us the slip. . . . Should war become

inevitable, this is my plan: we will deliver a swift, powerful offensive that will surprise Prussia in the midst of her mobilization, and detach the Southern States from her. Italy and Austria will declare for us. England and Russia will remain neutral, if they do not actively favor us, and Prussia will be obliged to give in, even without fighting, perhaps. Thus the losses in man-power will be much reduced. Besides, I do not mean to be exigent when it comes to the peace terms. A rectification of the Rhine frontier, together with Luxembourg, will suffice me . . ."

He meditates for a moment, then adds:

"Unfortunately, we're counting our chickens before they're hatched. Go and send off your dispatch, de Gramont, and farewell till tomorrow. For my part, I will telegraph Francis Joseph and Victor Emmanuel this evening, to keep them informed of the latest developments."

He rises, shakes his minister's hand (he is very fond of de Gramont, nephew of his old friend, the Count d'Orsay) and, leaning on his cane, moves off toward the vestibule, the Empress at his left.

"Well, are you satisfied?" he asks as they go.

"Yes, we had to come to it."

"I am going into the park for a few minutes," he says. "Send Louis to me, it will distract my thoughts."

"Presently," says Eugénie. "I will join you there."

She leaves him. He moves off, slowly, toward the great basin. The sun is still very warm, though it is nearly six. There is not a soul in the verdured alleys. While waiting for his son, he sits down on a marble bench in the shade of some giant lindens. Pensively he twirls the cane between his legs. It is a gift from the Duchess de

Cambacérès; its head is a chased eagle of pure gold. How clear and beautiful this July day is! Yet he feels somewhat oppressed. He raises his head. Down yonder is the Château of Saint-Cloud, golden in the sunlight, rising against the sky-line like some Armida's palace. In the distance he sees the Prince's tall graceful shadow advancing along the gravel walk. He is not alone. A lady accompanies him, large, fleshy, in a mauve gown, carrying a mauve parasol. He narrows his eyes and recognizes Princess Mathilde, come from Paris in search of news. Pleased to see her, Napoleon rises with an effort and goes to meet her.

All three promenade around the basin. The little second lieutenant sends flat stones skipping over the water. Napoleon acquaints his cousin with the latest developments. She does not question France's victory if war is declared.

"I'm an old war-horse," she tells him, laughing. "If I were younger, I would join the army as a *vivandière*."

They speak of the troops:

"Lebœuf estimates that I can count on having 300,000 men absolutely ready to take the field in fifteen days. We will anticipate the enemy by a week at least."

"Three hundred thousand men?" says Mathilde, surprised; "that's not very many."

"Ah, but that's only for a start. Counting in the reserves, we'll have 600,000. It is unfortunate that in '68, Niels's ideas and my own were not put into effect. We would now have six additional army corps. But we encountered so much resistance . . ."

"I know, even among the officers. But I have confidence in our soldiers."

"And so have I. The Prussian army, however, is by no means so negligible as those in the Empress's entourage say it is. I have read the reports of Colonel Stoeffel, our military attaché in Berlin, and they are decidedly alarming."

The Prince Imperial utters a glad cry. He has succeeded in a threefold ricochet. Napoleon stoops to pick up a stone.

"As at Arenenberg . . . Do you remember, Mathilde?"

A cutting anguish makes him groan. He drops the stone and slowly straightens up again, white as a sheet and breathing hard. Mathilde stretches out her arms, thinking he is about to collapse. He tries to reassure her with a gesture. His eyes are dim with tears. His imperial moves as though he were speaking. But Mathilde cannot hear a sound.

At last he murmurs:

"Don't be alarmed. Say nothing. The boy did not notice. It's a trifle, I assure you. This ceaseless renal trouble. Painful, but you may take my word for it, not at all dangerous."

She leads him to a bench. His breathing becomes more regular, but Mathilde's frightened eyes do not leave him. He makes an effort to take up the conversation where it broke off:

"Stoeffel's reports . . . Yes . . . But Lebœuf insists he takes too gloomy a view of everything . . . Says he has a melancholy disposition. Lebœuf himself is very optimistic. He already sees us entering Cologne . . . Perhaps he's going a little too fast. Really, my dear, one cannot imagine the part played in events by men's tem-

peraments, their errors, their least little fads and fancies . . ."

She interrupts him.

"Have you thought of whom you will choose as commander-in-chief? Bazaine's name has been mentioned. He is not well liked."

"It will not be Bazaine; it will be I."

"Louis, you can't really have that in mind! You are too ill. You could not stand hours in the saddle. What would you do on the day of battle?"

"You exaggerate, my dear," he replies weakly.

"No, no, I do not exaggerate. You don't know how you look."

"Oh, I'm well aware of it. Conneau tells me often enough. I don't cut a very dashing figure."

"Come now . . ."

Wearily he raises his hand.

"What will you have, Mathilde? I have to. My name is Napoleon."

The young Prince is coming back to them. The Emperor watches him run up with awkward, coltish grace. He has Eugénie's features, her clear complexion, but his glance shows an amiability he has inherited from the Beauharnais. He is slender, animated, radiant with youth. He has the flexible lines of the adolescent body and an untroubled smile.

"Ah, Mathilde, how handsome he'll look on the coins!"

The statuesque lady gives a melancholy sigh. She thinks what a contrast that other face shows—burdened, drooping, undermined by suffering. Napoleon divines her thought. He passes his hand over his scanty locks.

"Bah," says he, "I have lived; I cannot complain. If only the boy is happy all will be well."

Leaning over to his cousin, he asks:

"You'll spend the evening with us, I hope, my dear friend? I'll be glad to have you a few hours longer."

"Yes, aunt," insists the young Prince, "promise you'll stay. I'm on furlough today. We'll play cards."

He is much attached to Mathilde, whose warm, changeless affection he instinctively appreciates.

She smiles:

"I shall ask nothing better, if your mother invites me."

The boy goes off. The Emperor and Mathilde resume their conversation. The sunlight is gone. The day is declining. Small golden clouds hang motionless in the sky.

"It is growing late," says the Princess. "Let us go in, you might catch cold."

"Here comes Eugénie, I think," declares Napoleon.

His ear, still keen, has caught the rustle of a skirt. The Empress, come from the château by a side-alley, approaches them. She exchanges a few polite phrases with Mathilde. The two have never been congenial. Occasionally, in moments of emotion, they have embraced each other affectionately, only to tear each other to pieces afterward. Eugénie's hatred for Prince Napoleon rebounds on his sister. And it is true that everything conspires to separate them, their religious as well as their political ideas. In order not to embroil herself with the Emperor, whom she loves with an abiding and grateful friendship, Mathilde has confined herself to her Mæcenan rôle of the artistic and literary princess—a second Marguerite of Navarre, "only more moral," as she gayly

declares. To which the Empress made a point of replying, to her intimates:

"What an exceedingly shameless woman this Marguerite must have been!"

They walk in advance. Napoleon and his son follow them, a few paces in the rear.

"Eugénie," says the Princess in a low tone of voice (it is seldom that she calls the Empress by her given name), "I told Louis that in the event of war it would not be right for him to take command of the army. His health is not good. He had another attack, a few minutes ago, in my presence."

"Bah!" sharply answered the Empress; "he has been overtiring himself lately. If only your cousin were more sensible . . . Do advise him to use his head."

"Can't you see how he has changed?"

"Why, no. He forgets that when a man is past sixty he should not play at being a young man, that's all."

She does not realize the Emperor's decline. Day by day evidence of it meets her eyes. Nor does her heart apprise her of what her eyes refuse to see—Napoleon's physical falling away. At present her feeling for him is essentially that of a business partner. She is preoccupied with the Empire rather than with the Emperor. All she thinks of is politics. Younger, stronger, more tenacious than her husband, she has gotten the better of his reserve, his mistrust, and has compelled him to share his power.

She governs, as he does, and even more so. In short, she is an Empress.

"If we take the field," she continues, "it is absolutely necessary for him to join the army. The country would

not understand his remaining in Paris. We are no longer living in the time of Louis XIV. An emperor is a military sovereign."

Mathilde says nothing.

"I do not desire this war," continues Eugénie, "as so many seem to think. I would rather see Prussia give in. No, I do not want war. It causes too much ruin, too much sorrow. And I, too, am a mother. But if it must come I do not fear it."

They stop to wait for the Emperor, walking heavily some hundred feet in the rear, to catch up with them.

"Mama," cries the little Prince, running up to Eugénie, "you want Aunt Mathilde to stay to dinner with us, don't you?"

"Certainly," replies the Empress. "It is too late for you to return to Paris, my dear."

The Princess feels the coldness of her tone.

"Thank you, Eugénie," she says. "My horses are excellent. I'll be back in the rue de Courcelles in half-an-hour. I'm expected."

"That's too bad," says the boy. "I would have been so pleased."

His mother stops him with a glance.

"When do you expect to establish yourself at Saint-Gratien?" she asks Mathilde.

"A little later, when the present crisis is over. At Saint-Gratien I'll be too far from all that's going on. I want to be able to get here easily. And if war breaks out, I'll stay in Paris and look after the wounded."

"Perhaps we'll not go to war," says the Empress.

Her exaltation has vanished. She is serious, almost

sad. The Emperor has rejoined them. Catching Eugénie's last words he declares:

"If King William is sensible . . ."

"Yes," says Mathilde, "King William . . . He's a decent fellow at bottom . . . But Bismarck?"

Without further words they slowly stroll back to the château.

PART FIVE

Sédan

On the Bazeilles road Napoleon had exposed himself to the enemy's fire the whole morning, on the picket-line. Having compelled his escort to take shelter, he had continued to sit his horse on a hillock, surrounded by a few officers. Shrapnel and shell fell round about him. Captain d'Hendecourt was killed at his right hand. Napoleon dismounted, pulled off his gloves, and himself carefully aimed and fired a mitrailleuse. A couple of artillerymen shouted: *Vive l'Empereur!*

At Waterloo, Napoleon I had tried to die when disaster approached. Death had drawn back from him. Napoleon III was trying to get himself killed at Sédan, and in his case death once more stepped aside. The parallel between the two lives, which formerly he had made a point of establishing, now refused to abandon him. It is in vain that he waits for the bursting bomb or shrapnel which, killing him, might, perhaps, save the Empire. It is in vain that his worried face envisages such a deliverance. What, and is it not to be accorded him? No. Fate, which has granted him so many favors, refuses him this one. He must keep on living.

It is eleven o'clock. Covered with dust, the Emperor rejoins his escort of cuirassiers, and, still walking his horse, returns to Sédan. The shells follow him into town. But either they are defective or they burst at too great a distance. On the bridge across the Meuse he meets

Colonel Stoeffel, whom he stops to exchange a few words. About to ride on, the air trembles. A shell falls a few feet in advance of him. The Emperor's chestnut paws the air. The shell bursts. Napoleon turns to the Colonel and with a voice weighed with sadness:

"Adieu," he said, "you have prevented me from dying."

Slowly he moves on toward the sub-prefecture in which he is lodged. The streets are encumbered with teams, caissons, and ambulances. It is the rout of an army in dissolution. Thousands of Zouaves and *Voltigeurs,* unarmed, their uniforms torn and disordered, mingle with the civilian crowd. Many are wounded. They draw back to let the escort pass, watching the Emperor ride by in silence. At times, however, a few cries are raised behind him:

"We have been sold!"

"They have led us to the slaughter!"

"Death to the traitors!"

Ragged, tipsy soldiers shake their fists.

He does not accelerate his pace, though these cries echo in his despairing heart. He bows his head a little lower and murmurs:

"Poor fellows!"

* * *

They had to lift him down from his horse. He was completely exhausted. For fourteen hours in succession he had suffered atrociously, without ceasing. Harried by terrible shooting pains in the stomach and kidneys, how could he continue to keep the saddle? Ever since leaving Paris, his bladder trouble had become aggravated. His urine was mingled with blood. At times, shaken by powerful convulsions, he had been seen to fling himself on

the ground and lie there for minutes at a time. For weeks past he had been unable to sleep, even with the aid of opium. But he suffered these agonies without complaint. Only to Conneau he now and again remarked: "I'm a very sick man."

In spite of the artifices of the toilet, his features changed. He could scarcely open his fever-swollen eyes. Under the rouge with which it was necessary to color his cheeks in order that his sight might not frighten the soldiers, his complexion was as leaden as clay.

At one o'clock he assembled his generals. Wimpfen, replacing wounded MacMahon, suggested breaking through the German lines.

"Let Your Majesty place himself in the midst of his troops. They will consider it an honor to clear the road for him."

The officers debated. The Emperor seemed benumbed and drowsy.

Suddenly, in a surprisingly incisive tone of voice, he said:

"I do not wish to make so many men die uselessly while I still can save them. We must submit to the inevitable. The army has sacrificed itself. It is my turn to do the same. Have the white flag hoisted."

There were loud objections.

He repeated:

"Have the white flag hoisted."

* * *

Well he knows that all is lost.

For some weeks past he has had no illusions on that score.

Since the end of July, at Metz, he has seen open the

abyss into which France, together with himself, was about to be precipitated. As formerly, when the Italian War broke out, the army was lacking in everything. Cannon, Chassepots, ammunition, equipment, baggage-wagons, ambulances, nothing was ready, in spite of Lebœuf's assurances. There was no discipline. The military leaders quarreled and refused to obey orders. The surprise attack which was to have stunned the enemy and have divorced the Bavarians from the Prussians, became incapable of realization. A million well-equipped men had risen against France along the Rhine. And France had scarce two hundred thousand in fighting trim. It was no longer a question of taking the offensive. They had been obliged to resign themselves to defending Alsace and Lorraine. August came, the first engagements, the first defeats—Wissembourg, Frœschwiller, Forbach. Europe saw the situation reversed, Napoleon in danger. Austria and Italy, urged to conclude the alliance and take the field, had excused themselves, scenting the coming catastrophe. The Emperor had felt himself deserted by every one at the identical moment. He closed his eyes and carried on. He was not the man to shrink from his fate. After Borny and Saint-Privat, when Bazaine's army was on the point of being shut up in Metz, he has escaped, leaving for Châlons, together with the Prince Imperial and Prince Napoleon. Already, in obedience to repeated reproofs from the Tuileries, he has resigned the chief command. Amid all the confusion, however, he had clung to one lucid idea, of which MacMahon approved. He wished, leaving Bazaine to immobilize large Prussian forces, to return to Paris with the army of Châlons, cover the capital, and supported by its chain of

forts, offer battle to an enemy wearied by marching, and ill at ease because of his unimpeded advance into the heart of the country. It was the wise thing to do in a military sense. It was politically wise. Paris, bitted and curbed, would be unable to revolt.

The Empress-Regent opposed the plan.

Her pride would not admit of Napoleon's return to Paris after two defeats. Supported by Persigny and Rouher, who, like her, were preoccupied with the dread of a revolution, and in order to save the dynasty, she *insisted* that MacMahon attempt to extricate Bazaine, offer battle, and win a victory.

The Emperor considered this march toward the north the maddest imprudence. Robbed of his civil authority, however, which had passed into the Regent's hands, and of his military control, taken over by Bazaine, humiliated, disgraced, he could no longer impose his will. His will? The colics which tormented him had done away with it. He let himself be carried like flotsam on the tide, an imperial phantom following his army like some tag-end of baggage. He bowed his head to Eugénie's menacing dispatches.

"I no longer count. She thinks only of her son." Together with MacMahon he turns back toward Metz and encounters Sédan.

* * *

During the night, Doctor Conneau came over to his bed, and said in a low tone of voice:

"Sire, the Guard regiments have burned their standards."

The Emperor drew him close and put his arms about him.

"That's good. It is worthy of the Malakoff and of Magenta. We are very unfortunate, but our honor is saved."

* * *

At six o'clock in the morning Napoleon, in a general's undress uniform, covered with a great cavalry mantle whose collar he turned up, shivering, got into an open carriage. The Prince de la Moskowa and three other officers accompanied him.

When the drawbridge of the South Gate was raised, the Zouaves on guard presented arms. A few still cried: *Vive l'Empereur!*

Napoleon smiled sadly and saluted.

The carriage, almost at a walk, to avoid jolting, moved off toward Donchery, where Count von Bismarck was cantooned. The Prussian Chancellor was still in bed when General Reille, sent on in advance, came to announce his visitors. He rose, hurried into his clothes without stopping to wash, and got into the saddle.

When he reached the Emperor's carriage, he dismounted, took off his great helmet, and said:

"I have the honor respectfully to place myself at Your Majesty's service."

Raising two fingers to the visor of his *képi,* Napoleon answered:

"Thank you, Your Excellency. I should like to see the King at once."

"I hope Your Majesty will excuse me, but that is hardly possible at the moment. His Majesty's headquarters are too far away, at Venderesse . . ."

So long as the capitulation had not been *signed,* he wished to give Napoleon no opportunity of influencing

his own sovereign to grant him more satisfactory conditions.

"Well, then, we'll go to Donchery. I must have a talk with you."

Bismarck bowed and remounting fell into place at the right-hand carriage door to accompany the Emperor.

Three hundred yards ahead Napoleon caught sight of a small one-story brick building, separated from the road by a sloping bank and a bit of fallow land.

"Perhaps we could stop here? . . ."

Bismarck seemed surprised. The house was so mean . . .

The Emperor shrugged his shoulders.

"What difference does it make?"

He got out with some difficulty, shiveringly drawing his mantle about him, and, leaning on the Prince de la Moskowa's arm, walked to the house. On the threshold the lessee, a Belgian weaver, much flurried, was eagerly anxious to oblige. Napoleon thanked him with a friendly wave of the hand.

Followed by Bismarck he climbed the stairs to the first floor, to a narrow room with white-washed walls, lit by a window from which a view of the Meuse could be divined. There was a rickety table and two rush chairs. The Emperor sat down and gave the Chancellor permission to sit. The Prince de la Moskowa left them.

"We meet again, my dear Count, under circumstances that are very trying for me. I would have liked to have prevented this war, but it was not in my power to do so. Public opinion in France forced it upon me."

"In Germany nobody wanted to go to war," was Bismarck's impudent reply, "my royal master least of all."

(And there he spoke the truth.) "The German people were dumbfounded that this Hohenzollern question, such a negligible one, and which, incidentally, seemed to have been settled in a manner satisfactory to France, should suddenly have precipitated a conflict. That demand for guarantees was useless. Who can trust to guarantees in politics?"

The Emperor nodded his head in agreement. He did not know, he would not be informed until later, by Benedetti, that the telegram Bismarck had sent from Ems to box the ears of France, had not been authorized by King William, and that by waiting two days, as Thiers had begged, in spite of the roars of the *Corps Législatif*, Bismarck would have been discredited and the war avoided.

With poignant dignity Napoleon came to the object of the step he had taken: to obtain terms of capitulation somewhat less rigorous.

"My dear Chancellor, your conditions, as General de Wimpfen has reported them to me, are too hard. They are not worthy of an army which has fought so heroically. I surrender my sword to you. That should be enough. Grant my soldiers the honors of war. I should have done as much for yours had Fate been kind to me."

"Sire, Your Majesty must deign to excuse me, but we are entering upon a purely military debate which I am not qualified to undertake. It is a discussion I must leave to the generals. I have had Field-Marshal von Moltke informed. When he arrives Your Majesty can once more prefer your demand to him. However, should Your Majesty be willing, I can this very moment talk

over a far more important question—that of the peace conditions."

He wanted peace, in spite of Moltke and the Prussian General Staff. In Bismarck's opinion the continuation of the war involved risks. If it became necessary to push on into France and besiege Paris, the dazzling initial successes might be compromised. And with whom would he have to negotiate if a revolution swept away the Empire? He much preferred Napoleon III to an exalted and menacing Republic.

"Peace?" said the Emperor. "Yesterday we might still have discussed it. But today? I am a prisoner. I no longer have the necessary authority to negotiate peace."

"Then who has?" demanded Bismarck.

"The Government in Paris, the Empress-Regent." And he added, firmly:

"I have surrendered only my own sword, not that of France."

"Then there is nothing useful left for us to do. If Your Majesty will pardon my frankness: we are obliged to insist upon our conditions in order not to imperil our victory."

Beneath Bismarck's deferential, even insinuating manner Napoleon divined a massive resolution, a haughty, obdurate will on which he could make no impression. Yet he told him that the Prussian Government would commit a political error if it abused its present advantages.

"This war has been a great mistake. There is no deep-rooted enmity existing between our respective nations. I myself have always been fond of Germany and the Germans. An equitable, generous peace might reconcile

us for the general good of Europe. In 1814 and 1815, the magnanimity of Czar Alexander was repaid by the esteem and gratitude of the French people."

"Yet it did not prevent the Crimean War," was Bismarck's rude rejoinder. "In any event," he added, "what was permissible for Russia in 1815, could not possibly be so for Prussia in 1870. Russia is a far land. Our countries adjoin. What I know of the French character, its susceptibility, its pride, makes me fear that we will not be forgiven for having proved the stronger. Hence we must take every precaution in anticipation of a war of revenge. Were I to reason in any other way, I should be unworthy of the confidence of the King, my master, and guilty of putting too low a price on the sacrifices made by the German people."

Nothing more was said until Field-Marshal von Moltke arrived.

* * *

The Emperor rose and gave him his hand. The man of war, as glabrous and bony as an old woman under his white poll, refused to seat himself, out of respect.

"My dear Marshal," said the Emperor, "I most urgently request that you allow the garrison of Sédan to leave the town with arms and baggage, on its parole pledging itself not to fight again until hostilities are suspended."

"That is impossible, Your Majesty," replied the Marshal. Like Bismarck he spoke an impeccable French.

"Then, at least let my men cross the Belgian frontier, where they will be disarmed. You can have no interest in holding them prisoner. All you need is to neutralize them as an offensive force. Their courage at least en-

titles them to chivalrous treatment from adversaries like yourselves. Your sovereign cannot refuse me this plea. I know his sentiments too well."

"I gladly acknowledge the bravery of Your Majesty's troops," von Moltke dryly remarked. "Yet this very bravery argues against allowing the garrison of Sédan to remain at liberty. Who would be responsible for the actions of soldiers of the kind? The Prussian General Staff demands the unconditional surrender of the entire army. Otherwise the bombardment will be resumed in two hours' time."

His hands trembling, Napoleon made a final protest:

"Your terms are too rigorous, Marshal von Moltke; they are too rigorous. I beg that you will refer them to the King. I feel sure that he will take pity on me, situated as I am."

"At Your Majesty's command," answered von Moltke, clicking his heels. "Yet I should be lacking in the consideration I owe Your Majesty were I to hold out the slightest hope."

He saluted and left. The Emperor and Bismarck followed him down the stairs.

Napoleon sat down in front of the house on a chair the weaver's wife brought out for him. He smoked almost without ceasing. Along the road, between the tall poplar-trees, Prussian troops were defiling in good order, followed by their supply wagons. The officers who had accompanied the Emperor sat on the slope. . . . Passers-by and war-correspondents were gathered on the opposite side of the road. One of them was taking notes.

Napoleon addressed a few eulogistic remarks to Bis-

marck on the bearing of the Prussian battalions and the organization of the General Staff.

"Your artillery is superior to ours," he said. "And your infantry gun . . . That is why you have beaten us. I have been greatly deceived."

Bismarck chewed his mercenary *Reiter* moustache as though to keep from smiling.

"Your Majesty cannot remain here," he said. "The Château de Bellevue, adjoining Donchery, would prove a more suitable residence for Your Majesty."

"I should have preferred to return to Sédan. I have not yet said farewell to my officers and soldiers."

"Will Your Majesty permit me to say that a return to Sédan might give rise to regrettable scenes? I have been told there there are those who are very bitter against the capitulation."

"It is true. Nor do I blame them. They are so unhappy."

"With Your Majesty's permission I will take leave, to go to Bellevue and have your apartments prepared. I shall then return to escort you there."

"Yes, yes. But do not forget, Count von Bismarck, that I make a point of seeing the King."

"I have already seen to it that His Royal Majesty has been informed, and I am sure he will come to Bellevue as soon as Your Imperial Majesty will have been installed there."

Napoleon answered the Chancellor's lowly bow by slightly raising his *képi*. He walked up and down a few times in the small vegetable garden which surrounded the weaver's house. Then he sat down once more, still smoking.

The Prussian regiments filed past, flags waving, bands blaring. They played martial airs: the *Wacht om Rhein,* and a march from "Tannhäuser." Then, like a horrible mockery, the brasses crashed into a very jolly, highly rhythmic motive, a kind of quickstep taken from Offenbach's "La Belle Hélène."

Three years before . . . All the kings of Europe in Paris. Power, festivities . . .

The Emperor again climbed the stairs to the weaver's upper room so that none might see his tears.

Wilhelmshöhe

Preceded by General von Monts, Governor of Cassel, to whose guard the King of Prussia had entrusted him during his captivity, Napoleon was going over the château at which he had arrived the evening before, at night. The huge grey building, a barracks tricked out with a pediment peristyle and the dome of a mosque, had formerly served Jerome, King of Westphalia, as a residence. Then it had been called *Napoleonshöhe*. The prisoner of the present day had come there, when between four and five years old, to visit his uncle. A child, he had slid on the parquet floors of its great rooms. The choice of such a jail was evidently meant as a courtesy on the part of the Berlin Court. But it also showed a want of tact. . . .

He entered a gallery whose walls were covered with mediocre paintings of the First Empire, battle-scenes and portraits. Stooping over his cane, he absent-mindedly passed between them. Prince Murat, Ney, Reille, Conneau, and Pietri followed him. At the lower end of the room, irradiate with light, was a canvas . . . He approached it, walking still more slowly. His mother, Queen Hortense, standing beside her harp, smiled down on him.

It was she—in person, with her long, gentle face, her neck gracefully inclined, her delicate shoulders; that was her hair, her sad, fleeting smile; those were her tender eyes. A long gown of white gauze descended to her feet.

With one hand she drew back a blue shawl, embroidered with golden palm-leaves.

She watched him approach her. From the wall of this palace which had belonged to Napoleon's youngest brother, from this chill German wall where she had been awaiting him for half a century, the immortal dead saw him come to her, her heart's beloved, her son, yesterday the proudest sovereign of Europe, now old and vanquished.

The Frenchmen of his suite had paused in the middle of the gallery, hardly breathing, weighed down with anguish. Napoleon, turning, made a little gesture. He wished to be alone.

For a long time he stood before this image, beyond any doubt the dearest among all those which peopled his memory. And he did not experience, as his friends had feared, a renewal of bitterness, but rather solace, a sensation of relaxation and peace after the storms that had so harrowed him. For the dead always preach patience. When he left the gallery he asked General von Monts to have the portrait placed in his room while he remained in Wilhelmshöhe.

* * *

On the way to captivity he had learned the news of his own deposition, of the flight of the Empress, and the proclamation of the Republic. He did not seem to be crushed by it. If, during the happier moments of his life, he had at times opened his heart, given way to the need to confide, in this breakdown of his fortunes, even with the tested men who accompanied him, even with Conneau, his oldest friend, he did not depart from a gloomy reserve, a kind of impenetrable frigidity.

"Is the man absolutely without feeling?" Reille angrily asked.

He felt he had a heart, but he thought it little worthy of a sovereign to allow it to lament at a time so tragically poignant.

* * *

At Wilhelmshöhe, repose, medical attention, and the salubrious air little by little restored his physical balance. He still suffered, yet his crises occurred at greater intervals and were less acute. He was able to take occasional walks in the park. He resumed his studious habits. As formerly, in Ham, he read and wrote a great deal. Together with his comrades in misfortune, he anxiously followed the stages of the war, the investment of Paris, the desperate efforts made by the armies of the national defense. At bottom he did not believe that this feeble soldiery could achieve any more lasting success in opposing the tremendous, scientific, martial cuttlefish which, guided by von Moltke, had spread its tentacles over a third part of France, and, little by little, was suffocating her. Yet these beardless *mobiles,* ill fed, poorly clad—he thanked and blessed them in his heart of hearts for their sustained fury of attack, for contesting every foot of the ground, with ten to one against them, without a glimmer of hope, without one favorable omen. When all seemed lost, they would, at least for times to come, envelop the name "Frenchmen" with an aura of the most touching glory.

During the first few weeks he had received quite a number of visitors: Princess Murat, the Duchess of Hamilton, Generals Froissard, de Gallifet, de Béville. The Prussian Government, thoughtfully considerate, al-

lowed him to receive whom he would. Yet soon Napoleon granted audiences only in exceptional cases.

"An Emperor's duties," he said, "do not end with his fall. I must preserve for France the knowledge, experience, and ability of all these men who have compromised themselves by coming here. I do not wish it said of them, 'He has returned from Wilhelmshöhe,' as formerly they said, 'He has returned from Coblentz.'"

Yet one visit he looked forward to—that of Eugénie. She had asked to share his captivity. He had evaded her request. He did not know that on September 3, when she had received the telegram from Sédan, she had inveighed against him in a terrible scene, whose witnesses, Conti and Filon, had been appalled. Haggard, with disheveled locks, like a Medusa, she had paced the already deserted chambers of the Tuileries, screaming:

"The dispatch lies! You all lie! The Emperor has not capitulated! A Napoleon does not capitulate. He is dead!"

Then fastening on another idea:

"If he is not dead, he is a wretch, a coward! He should have had himself killed. Why did he not bury himself beneath the ruins of Sédan? Couldn't he realize that he was dishonoring himself? What kind of a name will he leave his son?"

Her imprecations had ended only with the merciful fainting spell which finally allowed them to stretch her out on a bed.

The Emperor did not know this. He never came to know it. Yet he knew enough about it to make him bar his soul against the woman whom he had raised so high

and who, having driven him into ruin, had turned from him at the first defeats.

Eugénie had been his desire for a few months, and, so to speak, represented the public coronation of his affection the day after his ambition had been crowned. She had not made him happy. Perhaps there was no such thing as happiness possible for his shadowy soul, which, rebuffed by the real, sought refuge in the chimerical. Nevertheless, she remained his comrade, his associate, his spouse, in every good, stable, and familiar sense of the word. And, above all, she was in his eyes the mother of his son. She was variable and quarrelsome, possessed of a child's whimsicality, prejudice, and lack of comprehension, a supercilious haughtiness, a small-souled piety, but—she was the mother of his son.

For that reason, little by little, he had suffered her encroachments, yielded to her insistencies, to her imperious counsels. In the measure that his physique and will-power declined, in spite of his instinctive mistrust, he had allowed her to take an ever increasing part in the management of affairs. Obeying only her dislikes and infatuations, fed with servile flattery, she had led him to commit those major errors which, weakening the Empire, had called Bismarck's attention to it as an easy victim. Together with de Morny, she had flung France's finest regiments into Mexico's devouring maw. With all the fire and rancor of her being she had urged the war with Germany, at the very time when her obstinacy in guaranteeing the Pope—for a few brief weeks—a morsel of temporal power had caused the alliances with Italy and Austria, alliances which might have given birth to safety and even victory, to miscarry.

Napoleon did not blame Eugénie for all this. It was his own fault if, in blind confidence or utter lassitude, he had adopted her views. He was the Emperor; the whole responsibility was his. His head, being the loftiest, must bear the full onset of the hurricane. Yet, while he was wrestling with the most atrocious fears, in the midst of the fire, facing the enemy, she had abandoned him! Until his last hour he would recall those dispatches, those letters in which, sacrificing him to Fortune as a burnt offering, she had *forbidden* him to return to Paris. He had excused her mistakes, forgiven her injuries. But this betrayal . . .

* * *

Eugénie was announced at Wilhelmshöhe by Count Clary, on October 30, toward evening.

"Sire, the Empress is in Cassel. I have arrived a few minutes in advance of her."

The Emperor raised his head and said:

"Good. I have just written to ask her to come here."

He left his study table and went to receive Eugénie beneath the peristyle.

She stepped out of her carriage, pale, emaciated, her eyes feverishly bright. Her air of youthfulness had vanished. She was dressed in black. The guest at Wilhelmshöhe bowed. She made to fling herself into Napoleon's arms, but he withheld her, and, taking her hands, pressed them without the slightest trace of emotion.

"How are you?" he asked. "You must be worn out after your trip. And Louis?"

This cool reception, these polished phrases, after all that had happened, almost staggered her. The Emperor offered her his arm and led her to his study. Eugénie

refused to rest. She was eager once more to be alone with the Emperor and to talk with him. At that very moment, Pietri informed Napoleon that the Count von Monts was asking for an audience.

"Let him come in. I think he is bringing a reply to an inquiry of mine."

The Governor of Cassel, an old man in dress uniform, wearing a silver helmet, entered. The Emperor presented him to Eugénie. He bowed low to the Empress, who hardly noticed him.

"Well, General," said Napoleon, "have you received the authorization from the Grand General Staff?"

"Yes, Sire. Marshals MacMahon, Canrobert, and Lebœuf, prisoners of war, will be interned in Cassel, in accordance with Your Majesty's request, and can go to Wilhelmshöhe whenever Your Majesty wishes to see them."

"Thank you, my dear Count. I am going to ask you to prefer the same request with reference to Marshal Bazaine."

Metz had surrendered three days before. The news had reached the Empress on the eve of her departure from Chiselhurst for Germany.

Eugénie came over to the Emperor and in a low, animated tone of voice said:

"You cannot think of doing that. Bazaine here, about your person! Such a challenge to French public opinion! Lebœuf is bad enough!"

The Emperor replied:

"How so? They have tried to make Lebœuf the universal scapegoat. Yet he is far less guilty than many others."

Then he courteously dismissed the Governor, who already had tactfully fallen back to the door.

When it had closed Eugénie flung herself weeping on her husband's breast. He had some difficulty in disengaging her and making her sit down.

"Spare yourself and spare me as well . . ."

She asked after his health.

"I feel well enough for the moment. But I have suffered!"

"Ah," she cried, "if only I could have foreseen it, I would not have let you go to the front! You hid your condition from me!"

"I cannot bear to complain."

"Had I known how sick you were, I should have opposed going to war. We could have avoided it, if at all possible!"

He nodded.

"Yes, it would have been possible."

"This war—why in God's name did we undertake it? Alas, every one urged us on. The generals were so confident. And de Gramont!"

She dropped her head. For the first time he saw that there were grey strands in her golden hair. He was moved.

"You have a great deal to tell me," he resumed. "How did you get away from Paris? I lack all details . . . Tomorrow we'll talk of affairs."

Volubly, as though a precipitous flow of words would empty her soul of the rancor and poison which had filled it for the past two months, she told of the last hours of her regency. His head in his hands, he listened to her.

The Fourth of September—early mass in her little

chapel—revolt already swelling in the suburbs—the boulevards traversed by frenzied bands—the cry "Down with the Empire!" sweeping Paris. A delegation from the Legislature vainly urging her to abdicate. (At this juncture the Empress displayed magnificent self-possession, courage, and energy: "Proclaim my deposition, if you wish; for my part, I'll not desert my post!") Then the breaking of the storm, the Chamber of Deputies invaded by the mob—the troops and Trochu joining the rebels—the tidal-wave of revolution bearing down on the Tuileries—her last remaining friends, Mme. Aguado, Canrobert's wife, M. de Lesseps, begging her to leave—her passing along the Gallery of Apollo, through the halls of the *Musée*, her emergence on the colonnade, between the two ambassadors, Metternich and Nigra, very correct in their bearing, yet eager to cut short their show of devotion—a lagging hack, a street Arab's cry of "Lookit, there's the Empress!"—the drive through Paris to the Rothschilds, whose Swiss porter refuses to open the door—to the American dentist Evans—the trip to Deauville in a landeau—the crossing of the storm-tossed Channel on a sailing vessel of forty tons—the little Prince returned to her at Hastings—

She fell silent, exhausted.

"You, too, have had your troubles," he said slowly.

"Do you remember," she answered with a shrill laugh, "how one day they were joking in our presence about the fall of Louis-Philippe, and his flight in a hackney-coach? And I said: 'We'll never leave in that way, we'd rather have them cut us to pieces on the steps of the Tuileries.' Well, there you are. I left in a hackney-coach, after all!"

Quivering with excitement, she paced up and down, a caged lioness.

"That does not signify," said the Emperor. "I had to surrender my sword and I've had to see my soldiers die in vain. How brave they were! If you only knew . . . Reichshoffen . . ."

His voice broke.

* * *

At dinner, a very gloomy one, in spite of the Emperor's efforts, the fall of Metz was the sole topic of conversation. It obsessed every one present. Eugénie hardly spoke at all. Surrounded by an atmosphere of respect more punctilious than during her days at the Tuileries, she sensed that all the affection, all the devotion, all the pity of these courtiers of defeat was for the Emperor. When the gentlemen passed into the smoking-room she excused herself on the score of fatigue, and retired to her rooms. She expected that Napoleon would come to see her.

He did not come.

* * *

She went down to her husband's study the following morning at an early hour. He was awaiting her as he read the papers, still full of the surrender of Metz.

"Bazaine has been sent to Cassel," said Napoleon. "Ah, the Empress Charlotte was right in spite of her madness. He was a bird of ill omen."

"Well," said she, "and what are we to do now?"

He seemed surprised. "What I have been doing up to now—continue to wait."

"Continue to wait? But we can only lose by so doing. We must treat."

"Treat? My signature is no longer valid."

"Mine is. I am still the Regent. I have not resigned my powers. There has been no abdication."

"There has been a revolution. Technically it is nothing. Actually, it is overpowering. You can no longer speak for France."

"I can speak for the Empire. That is enough for Prussia. If you care to authorize me to do so, I will begin negotiating at once. Nothing would please King William and Bismarck better. They fear and detest the Republic. They will do all in their power to favor an imperial restoration."

"What do you know of this?"

"While Bazaine was still holding out in Metz, Bismarck proposed to me to assert my powers as Regent, and in that capacity to order the Marshal to capitulate. Set free, together with his army, artillery, and standards, he would have rejoined me at Calais. There I would have convoked the Chambers, have reconstituted the Government, and have named plenipotentiaries to make peace."

"How is it that I have known nothing about all this?" asked the Emperor, severely.

Without embarrassment she answered:

"My means of communication with you were not reliable. And besides, I should not have accepted any proposal without first coming here to reach an understanding with you."

He looked away from her.

"Very well," said he. "Then you yourself refused his offer? Bismarck's only object was to release the Prussian army immobilized before Metz. One would have to be mad to keep on trusting him."

"I did not refuse. I wished to know the terms upon which Prussia would insist. First through Bourbaki, then through Boyer, both of whom came from Metz under safe-conduct, Bismarck let me glimpse an honorable peace, like that which Austria signed in '66, a heavy war indemnity, no doubt, and the demolition of Strasbourg, but no cession of territory . . ."

"They were deceiving you. Bismarck wants more."

"Yes, he wants more. I know it now. In order to know the truth positive, I addressed myself directly to King William."

"What! you went so far as that without informing me?"

"Yes, it was my rightful duty since I am still the sole legal authority in France. Besides, our friends, Rouher, La Valette, Persigny, even your cousin Napoleon, whom I consulted at Chiselhurst, urged me to do so."

"And the King replied to you?"

"His letter reached me two days ago. That is why I came here without first letting you know I was coming. Here it is. It is courteous, but very harsh."

He took the letter she handed him, unfolded and glanced over it.

"Nothing definite. Polished phrases. Yet I can read their idea between the lines. They want Strasbourg. Strasbourg and Alsace," he added, overwhelmed.

"In principle, yet it might be possible to obtain better terms by negotiating. There will be room for bargaining."

"I will not lend myself to it," answered the Emperor, with sudden firmness. "It would have been possible for me to have agreed to moderate terms. But to cede Alsace, no. A Bonaparte will not put his name at the foot

of such a treaty. I repeat that we must continue to wait. France is capable of a prodigious awakening. No matter how great our disasters, the war has not ended. The Army of the Loire has gained successes. Faidherbe is still fighting in the north. A miracle might come to pass!"

The Empress showed signs of impatience.

"I wish it would, but I do not think it will. And you yourself cannot believe in it! The German armies are too superior in number and armament. Yet for the time being I can see that we are annoying the Prussians, who are worried by the extension of their lines. One might take advantage of this by securing better conditions to-day than a few months later, when von Moltke will have triumphed on every front."

"I do not agree with you. I think the King and even Bismarck himself would rather treat with me than with the Republic. But they would make me pay too dearly for my restoration. I do not want to return to the Tuileries on one of their baggage-wains."

"And yet it would be in the interests of France. Their conditions for the Republic will be still more onerous than for us. They'll not merely insist that she give them Alsace, but Lorraine as well, and millions beside."

"Possibly. Then it will be the business of the Republic to refuse them. I have given the problem a good deal of thought. As early as September, Hellewitz, an emissary of Bismarck, visited me as the bearer of official proposals. He did not commit himself with regard to the territorial concessions. But he was very definite on one point: our chief fortified places in the East were to be provided with Prussian garrisons after the conclusion of peace."

"Absolutely inacceptable!"

"Quite so. And that being the case, I rejected these overtures whose only aim, in connection with Bismarck's tortuous soul, very likely, was to give him a chance to blackmail the Republicans. I refused to make it any easier for him. I do not wish, in these times, to complicate the task of the provisional government. I do not wish to divide the French. I do not wish to risk a civil war. A war with an alien enemy, with all its horrors, is sufficient!"

"Then you would give those who overthrew us in the face of the foe a free hand, you would abandon France to those who have betrayed her? They are the ones who will make peace, these Republicans who greeted their country's misfortunes with transports of joy, because it gave them a chance to seize the power. This criminal revolution has ruined everything irreparably. In spite of our reverses we should have been allowed to conclude the war. Afterwards, they could have had an accounting with us. I would have been glad to have given up the throne, could I have done so in a dignified way. A change in the situation was still possible. Had it not been for the Fourth of September, Germany would have seen all Europe rise against her."

"Put no faith in that . . ."

"Italy, Austria, they would have taken the field, in the end."

"Italy? When he heard about Sédan, Victor-Emmanuel cried: 'Luckily, there was no alliance! We've had a narrow escape!' And Francis-Joseph rubbed his hands."

"An English or Russian intervention . . ."

"England has too serious a grudge against us for having thought of annexing Belgium. And the Czar, who has

watched us incline toward Poland, expects a revision of the Treaty of Paris from Prussia. No, there was nothing we could do. The dice were loaded against us. We were completely isolated. We were in the hands of Fate. Let us blame none lest we be blamed. France . . ."

She interrupted him with a savage cry:

"Ah, France! one should never be unlucky in France!"

The Emperor blew away the smoke of his cigarette.

"Control yourself. No, one should not be unlucky in France, or elsewhere, for that matter. All nations are unjust when they are suffering. Yet the French are a great and generous people. I shall always love them. I reproach them for nothing. See what they are doing. Think of the heroism of starving Paris, where not a soul thinks of surrender. Think of the armies sprung from the soil, in which everything is improvised, even their victories. Think of these boys without bread or cartridges, who still hold their own against the most experienced armies in the world. You speak of dignity. France is vanquished, but she takes her beating standing."

"It is well to think of France, that I realize. Yet we are not forbidden to think of ourselves, and of our son. If, thanks to an early peace and with the assistance of the army which, all in all, remains true to us, we do not repossess ourselves of the power, the Republicans will become rooted in their control, and Louis will not be Emperor!"

"He will be, if he lives. Time will be in our favor. Justice will be done us. We shall be pitied. The nation, a prey to parties, will seek stability; it will only find it in the Empire. It will recall us."

"Chimeras all!"

"Certain ones among my chimeras, in the past, have been realized, I believe. I have emerged from Waterloo."

"Yes, but Waterloo was not Sédan."

"I have faith in the future."

"The future! . . ."

She looked at him with anger and pity. What kind of a future could Napoleon III, aged, ailing, and a captive, still look forward to?

He divined her thought and said:

"History is the future of deposed sovereigns. It may be that she will not be indulgent in her treatment of me. But at least she will be unable to say of me that, while war was raging, I put the interests of my dynasty before those of my country."

"The two are not antagonistic," she replied, trying to return to actualities. "On the contrary, we are doing France an ill turn by merely standing on the sidelines. Without committing yourself, and free to disavow me, at once, if necessary, let me . . ."

He harshly interrupted her.

"No. We'll not speak of it again. Enough has been said."

She was silent, struck dumb with astonishment. In spite of their conjugal differences, and the divergency of their views with regard to Louis and to politics, he had never taken that tone to her. He was amiable and courteous. She did not know how to reply to these words. They indicated that in spite of age and misfortune, Napoleon remained the Emperor, and that Eugénie, in opposing him, counted for nothing at all. . . .

It occurred to her that she would have to regain his

confidence, repossess herself of the ascendency she had exercised over him during the last years of his reign. She did not doubt but what she would succeed, and, with the assistance of their entourage, incline Napoleon to take the path in which he had for the moment refused to follow her.

That afternoon, when they were again alone, she informed him of her intention of establishing herself in Wilhelmshöhe.

"I do not want to leave you again. My place is here."

He gently replied:

"You will leave tomorrow. It is your duty to rejoin your son. I am a prisoner of war and I *intend* to remain one until peace is concluded. Your presence here would no longer permit me to be one."

She was about to protest.

"Tomorrow," he repeated. "I have had the necessary orders given."

Chiselhurst

In the long, first-story gallery at Camden Place, the Emperor was walking as he talked with his son, resting his arm on the latter's shoulder. The young Prince was about to leave for the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich. He was wearing his English cadet uniform, which set off his still rather slender figure to advantage. He had the fresh complexion and clear eyes of a child. His curling hair had grown darker, and was now almost chestnut in color. He looked less like his mother. And yet, the curve of his nose, his long lashes, the delicacy of his limbs . . . But he retained a flexible grace, a manner of smiling, of inclining his head, which recalled Queen Hortense. There were some gestures, too, which when younger he must have caught from his father, and which had become habitual. He spoke quickly and with feeling. He was loyal and ardent, yet well-bred and very affable. At sixteen he was already ambitious and had a keen feeling of his station.

"Do you know whom Louis reminds me of most of all?" Napoleon would say to Conneau. "Of my poor brother, killed at Forli."

They had been spending some happy weeks at Torquay, while the Empress had gone to Spain to see the Countess de Montijo. Never had father and son been so intimately close to each other. Growing up, Louis showed himself a true comrade. He displayed a tender admira-

tion for his father. And Napoleon came to love his son more and more. The Emperor found him the most precious gift Fate had bestowed upon him in the course of a long and varied life, a gift the more precious because it consoled him for his reverses, one for whom, despite his weariness, he rallied his powers. Louis was his present defense, his future revenge, against man's ingratitude.

Walking side by side on the old green carpet sewn with ribands, bound and flowing, they had already spent many an hour in this gallery. Louis would question his father with regard to scientific, military, or historical points, would ask about the great Emperor, his family, and especially about the ups and downs which had led the captive from Ham to the Tuileries. This past, so near to the father, so distant to the son, was given a deep relief by the chief actor, who discussed it with the freedom of familiarity, as though it were all a question of very simple happenings, like those in any ordinary life. For a long time they had avoided speaking of the war and of the fall of the dynasty. Yet they had come to it. Napoleon wanted his son to be informed with regard to his own political views and his projects. Often, when one of the heads of the Imperialist Party, Rouher, Jérôme David, La Valette, Chevereau, came to Camden Place, he allowed Louis to be present during the interview, thus arousing the Empress's discontent.

He hoped, by his own example, to accustom him to regard individuals and facts from a superior plane, without prejudice and without resentment. He passed judgment on the masters of the Republic, willingly recognizing their talents and services, criticizing their actions with a historian's calmness, as though these men, who had risen

against him and had torn him from the throne, had been dead centuries long.

One day, when he was praising Thiers's capacity for hard work and his penetration, the young Prince could not help but remark:

"But, Papa, he's your worst enemy!"

"An enemy? Louis, never use that word when you speak of a Frenchman. We have no enemies in France; we have only political adversaries. Seen from here, the one most opposed to my views still seems a friend to me."

Louis's entrance into Woolwich was a cruel trial for the Emperor. And still he admitted that this separation, which the Empress had demanded, had its advantages. A military education was essential for Louis. As Eugénie had kept on repeating ever since his childhood, it was a question of making a man of him. She reproached the Emperor for spoiling the adolescent boy by over-indulging him in his likings. She herself was more virile with regard to her son. She would have had him study harder and work more. The discipline at Woolwich would be beneficial for this often rebellious youth who, without ever failing in respect, at times affronted her. Besides, Louis would return to Camden Place every week-end.

"Above all, look to it that they don't punish you," said the Emperor. "I'll not see you Saturday. I shall be very lonely without you, my boy. . . ."

M. Augustin Filon, the Prince's tutor, appeared at the end of the gallery. He bowed and waited at a discreet distance.

"Here's M. Filon," the Emperor said. "He has come

to fetch you. Will you grant us another moment, M. Filon?"

He gave Louis a few further recommendations: to be comradely, to live exactly like the other young Englishmen with whom he would rub elbows on the Academy benches, to forget that he was a Prince while in their company, but never to forget that he was a Frenchman.

A door opened and the Empress, in turn, appeared:

"Louis," she said, "you'll be late getting there."

The Emperor affectionately embraced his son and said no more. Then, reëntering his room, he stood near the window, in order that he might follow with his eyes the carriage which was carrying off the son he so loved.

After that he lived in even greater retirement. He spent the better part of his day in a narrow cabinet adjoining his room, modestly fitted out with old furniture, surrounded by books and papers. There he worked in a cloud of smoke. From his window he could see well-trimmed lawns and a sloping meadow sown with clumps of trees, where cows were at pasture.

He received no one in his cabinet, but went down to the drawing-room to give audience to his English or French visitors. Always unpretentious, he nevertheless made a point of maintaining, for himself and for his family, the forms of sovereign rank, less useful when one is in power, yet which afford the fallen prestige and protection.

The Empress, at times, compelled him to take a drive with her. But he would soon return to his work-table, happy once more to find himself among his plans and his reviews. Occasionally, in order to "gossip," he would summon Conneau. The Doctor had not left him. As he

had promised, long ago, he was to spend his life in the Emperor's shadow. Loyal by birth, he was happy in serving a master whose intimate friend he would always be. Never, even during the days of greatest distress, had either felt the slightest impatience or acrimony where the other was concerned. Even the Empress, on occasion, irritated by this communion overrich in remembrance, respected an attachment so long-enduring, so elevated. She, too, was fond of Conneau.

With the Doctor, Napoleon talked about his mother, about Arenenberg, of their long-past adventures together. With this witness, of whom he was sure, he would lose himself in that extraordinary life which destiny had crowned in spite of so many slips. In retrospect he saw his splendid ascent to the very summit of Europe, his vast power. Step by step, he scrutinized his actions with a desire to be impartial, with a good faith which would have surprised many of his adversaries. The Second of December, with which he was reproached as a perjury and a crime, had he not been right in carrying it out? He wanted to save France from disorder, to restore her to strength and power. Had it not been for the Prussian War, his reign would have been one of the most prosperous France ever had known. The liberty he had confiscated he had returned to the nation by degrees. He had frankly set his feet in the constitutional path. And there was merit in so doing, against the uninterrupted opposition of the absolutist influences of Persigny, of the Empress, of all those who feared the phantoms of '89 and '48.

Had he managed the country's affairs so badly?

Having announced an era of peace, he had engaged in wars. And the Crimean War had been a costly one. Yet

it had torn asunder the Treaty of Vienna, had confirmed the English alliance, and restored France to the first place in Europe. The Italian War . . . It had had its advantages; it had given Savoy and Nice to France. Had it not been for the insolvable Roman question, United Italy, thanks to France, would have furnished a support against Germany. Yet that nationalist theory which, in place of the weak states of former times, tended to surround France with great countries independent in political outlook, was he fully and solely responsible for it, as so many writers again and again asserted? It was a doctrine he had supported from his youth on. And, become Emperor, he had made it one of the bases of his external policy. Yet, properly speaking, was the idea really his own? It was one of the famous concepts of his time. It had been born together with the epoch, generous, idealistic, imprudent. He had espoused it, had given it its expansive force. Yet Lamartine, or Ledru-Rollin, or Montalembert, had they been in power, would have thought as he had, would have acted as he had with regard to Italy and to Germany. Only—it was he who had occupied the throne, and since he had been unsuccessful, he had been condemned. That he had been judged with such exceeding rigor afflicted him, but it did not arouse his indignation.

"The nation forced me into the war with Prussia," he told Conneau. "Yet I undertook it and made a poor job of it. And though it would be easy for me to find excuses, nevertheless, I do not want to exculpate myself. I would be degrading myself were I to plead my cause against my people. There can be no extenuating circumstances for an Emperor."

He said no more, and for a long time the Doctor and he kept silence, content to feel between them the warmth of half a century of friendship. Then Conneau noiselessly disappeared. The Emperor relit his cigarette, which had gone out, and, alone in the twilight, his eyes closed, returned to his dreams.

And now it was of the future that the indefatigable visionary thought. He was sixty-five. He realized the usury he had practiced with regard to his physique. Yet he had not given up the idea of reconquering the throne, of reassembling the fragments of his shattered power. For his race, for his son. The imperial régime, so he thought, had not been overturned by a genuine revolution, but by the plot of a band of politicians emboldened by the treason of Trochu. The National Assembly, elected by fraud, did not represent the country. It had been unable to give birth to an ordered government. The Republic was vitiated from the very start by the cowardly peace it had signed and by the Commune. It stood for a rule of negligence and humiliation. Watched by the Legitimatists, it stumbled about among the tremendous ruins of the Empire. Eighteen years of wealth and glory could not sink into the abyss without leaving profound substructures, keen regrets. France had suffered an access of discouragement. Yet one should not despair of her. And Napoleon, incidentally, was made of the stuff that never despairs. He was the inveterate servant of his mission. While he lived he would believe himself the chosen of Fate. There had been the return from the island of Elba. There was the return from England. He saw himself reëntering France by surprise, gathering up faithful battalions on his way, throwing wordy little Thiers

out of the Elysée and there installing himself for some reparative years, surrounded by wise counselors, in order to secure the advent of his son. He would turn over his place to him as soon as negotiations with Germany, supported by an alliance with London and Vienna, would have deleted the harshest clauses of the Treaty of Frankfurt.

Prussia, confronted by the Empire restored, could not insist upon the exigencies—which as Eugénie had foreseen—she had bludgeoned out of a government of insurgents, without stability or certitude. Emperor William, moved by prudence even more than by chivalry, would not oppose their amelioration. He would realize that so brutal a peace would sooner or later condemn Europe to undergo a new war, one appalling in view of the amplitude of its armaments, and whose issue might prove destructive to the new and fragile edifice of Bismarck's erection.

This work of reparation was the last which Napoleon III assigned himself. Afterwards, like the aged Simeon, he would turn away his face from the world. He would abdicate, and would go off somewhere into the Midi, to rest and to die. To die, yet without regrets, without remorse, at one with himself, at peace with his people. He loved them. He never had loved them so greatly. Defeat, exile. . . . He could not mention France without emotion. He, too, would like to sleep, when his hour struck, in the Invalides. . . .

He lived enwrapped in these delusions.

"I am the only solution," he would repeat.

Those about him never doubted it. All who lived in Camden Place thought that France, so accustomed to the

Emperor, was wearying for him, that, at the bottom of her soul, she longed for his prompt return, that he had only to appear for her at once to fling herself into his arms.

All those leaders of the Bonapartist party who, crossing the Channel, came to Chiselhurst to depict in exaggerated colors the confusion reigning in France, nourished this confidence and urged immediate action. M. Thiers, so they insisted, had lost all prestige. There was no majority in the National Assembly. The Republicans were under suspicion, the Royalists were rent by dissension, the *bourgeoisie* was worried, the great mass discontented. The army, the magistracy, all officialdom regretted the Empire. An immense tacit conspiracy of interests was bound to favor the Emperor's restoration.

The plan which Napoleon III adopted, without, by the way, confiding it in detail to the Empress, was simple. He would embark on a yacht, land in Flanders, and make his way to the Camp of Châlons. There he would have himself recognized by the troops, the more easily because many generals already had been won over. And thence he would march on Paris.

One evening he said to Conneau:

"Another month, and we'll be in the saddle."

* * *

Nevertheless, he began to suffer again from his bladder trouble. The malady, after seeming to yield, once more pitilessly bent him double. He could no longer walk. Even carriage riding caused him atrocious suffering. He had spent the September of 1872 on the Isle of Wight, and it had done him good. But he could not prolong his stay.

"Hotel life," he said, "is too expensive for me."

The Paris papers said he had saved a *milliard* from his shipwreck. In reality, after eighteen years of rule, with a civil list of twenty-five millions, he was reduced to living in the most careful way. Only the economy of the Empress, to whom he turned over the management of his funds, made it possible for the guests of Chiselhurst to keep up appearances in a modest yet decent manner. Eugénie's diamonds, as well as the palace of the Cæsars at Rome, which was the Emperor's property, had been sold. A few properties in Spain followed suit. The Empress owned valuable real estate in Paris, but it had been sequestered. Napoleon was indifferent to this penury. He always had spent without counting. Moneyless, he did without, nor gave it a thought. Like himself, his closest friends had nearly all been impoverished. Persigny was debt-ridden. The Murat, Ney, and Fleury families were straitened. Conneau was penniless. The Empire had founded no fortunes. Napoleon's intimates had lived like prodigals, like gamblers.

In his embarrassment the Emperor had only one regret: that he could no longer, as before, respond to demands for assistance. At times it made him heavy-hearted. Alone, he would have frittered away his last resources. But the Empress—though, contrary to an opinion widely prevalent, she was not avaricious—was watchful.

In December Napoleon's suffering increased to such a degree that, with his consent, Conneau and Corvisart called in three of the most famous English specialists: Sir James Paget, Sir William Gull, and Sir Henry Thompson. Since the consultation in July, 1870, the fact that

the Emperor's malady was caused by a stone had been past question. A sounding undertaken on January 2, with the patient under the influence of chloroform, showed that it was enormous, as large as a pigeon's egg.

"This man," said Sir Henry Thompson to his colleagues, "must have been a hero to have kept his saddle for five hours at a stretch at Sédan."

The practitioners agreed that an operation was urgently necessary.

Yet which? The opening up of the bladder, quicker, yet fraught with grave possibilities of danger given Napoleon's age and debility? Or—a long, painful process, *lithotrity,* a crushing of the stone several times repeated, which seemed to offer hardly any risk because it could be interrupted at any moment? Sir Henry Thompson and Conneau favored this method. The Emperor took their advice. And he insisted that there be no delay.

"To enter Paris in a carriage," he told his friend, "would make a bad impression. I cannot march at the head of the troops, leaning on a cane. I must arrive on horseback."

The first operation was carried out on January 3, at three o'clock in the afternoon, by Sir Henry Thompson, assisted by his colleagues. Good-sized fragments were extracted. The following day the Emperor was without fever, and though he still suffered, his face looked less yellow and bloated.

On January 6, the crushing was resumed. It greatly fatigued Napoleon, who did not react well to the effects of the chloroform. Fever set in. Conneau showed alarm. A third operation had been fixed for the ninth. Conneau

would have preferred to have had it put off for a longer interval, and took up the matter with the Empress.

"But what can we do, my dear fellow? He is eager to have it over with. And Sir Henry Thompson assures me there is no danger."

"Will the Emperor's organism support these repeated shocks?"

"He is healthy."

"He is healthy, but so fatigued."

Eugénie was by nature a partisan of energetic measures. Nevertheless, she said:

"I will mention it to the gentlemen myself. And you must speak to your patient about it. You can do more with him than I can."

"I dread frightening him," said the Doctor.

Notwithstanding, he suggested to Napoleon that the operation be adjourned for two or three weeks.

"Not on any account," replied the Emperor. "I prefer to have them finish now. Every day saved counts for me."

And when Conneau asked him whether he wished to see his son, he smiled.

"Do not disturb him, he is working."

It was on the evening of January 8, 1875. Sir William Gull had ordered that the patient be given a strong dose of chloral to insure him a night of undisturbed slumber. Corvisart prepared it. The Emperor showed a disinclination to take it.

"I'm not suffering now," he said. "Later, perhaps . . ."

The Empress insisted. At last he yielded. The dose,

too strong, perhaps, at once plunged him into a heavy slumber which lasted all night. The following morning, at nine o'clock, he was still asleep. Conneau and Corvisart found him breathing regularly, but with a very low pulse. They sent for the Empress. Conneau examined his enervated face, marbled with livid blotches.

"He is doomed," thought he.

He applied some salts to his nostrils.

The Emperor opened his eyes and recognized his friend:

"Henri," he said, in a changed voice, "were you at Sédan?"

Then he closed his eyes as though once more overcome by sleep. The Empress entered with Clary.

She, too, had no illusions as to his condition.

"Why, he is dying! Clary, hurry to Woolwich and fetch Louis!"

* * *

On his knees, his shoulders heaving, he wept, his head on the sheet, holding his father's hand, still warm, in his own hands. Seated at the foot of the bed the Empress, tearless, watched him.

This boy was now the Emperor.

That abdication which she had for a moment considered, and which Napoleon had rejected, death had now imposed on him. Would not the sudden end of the father, in exile, work upon the French conscience in favor of the son, reanimate the courage of the torpid, and resuscitate dormant gratitude? With Napoleon III died the Empire's mistakes. France could not reproach his son with Sédan. On the contrary, Napoleon IV would embody her hope of

vengeance. At one and the same time he would avenge the nation and the Bonapartes. And he would also avenge her, the Empress, the woman so hated, so calumniated, whose sole fault—a major one—had been that in a woman's frame she had nursed too virile a heart.

The flames of the candles woke quivering reflections on the pale head which dented the pillow. As her hands fingered her rosary, Eugénie again saw the Emperor on the morning of their wedding-day, approaching her with the jeweled collars of Charles the Fifth and Napoleon about his neck, followed by all who were most illustrious in France. She saw him once more on horseback, before the bronze column, holding the little Prince, at the return of the soldiers from Italy. Marvelous visions. Fairy-tales. And, notwithstanding, History's very self.

Through him she had become the world's most brilliant sovereign. Because he had loved her he had offered her his throne as one offers a bouquet. Now that he had died, and was approaching dissolution, now that it was too late to give expression to anything she felt, in this solemn and equitable hour, he revealed himself to her as she never yet had beheld him—he was *great!* Not with the obvious grandeur which had dazzled her, and whose nullity the exercise of sovereign power had disclosed. But great in himself, detached from events and successes, great by reason of his independent spirit, his steadfast heart, because of all the nobility and kindness formerly inherent in his mortal remains. He had borne a happiness and a misfortune alike incredible with an unmoved soul. He had had his share of faults and weaknesses, but he never had harbored a petty care nor an ignoble feeling. He

had been one of the best among the men of his time. Would posterity take that into account? Napoleon III had found peace. Would he also, some day, find justice?

She rose and knelt in prayer by her son's side.

THE END

B
NAPOLEON II Aubry, Octave
Phantom emperor

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